Day of the River

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Orange (Takano Ichigo)

chapter 1

RAW SCANS: Mercury Studio
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TRANSLATING: HeeJoo
TYPESETTING: HeeJoo
PROOFREADING: HeeJoo

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CONTENTS

orange

letter one

takano ichigo

高野苺
攜手奇蹟。
一手忙腳亂地準備後衝出家門。
嗯、似乎趕上了呢。此時。
一封信突然映入了我的眼簾。
咦、這封信是…。
啊 今天是「我人生第一次賴床」。
總之先把信塞入包包裡。
長野縣松本市。
季節是春天。
一如既往的櫻花和、邁出16歲步伐的「我」。
Orange
大型新連載
50P
水銀工作室
MERCURYSTUDIO.ORG
3月新連載第2彈登場
水銀加速開始
新連載陸續登場中
另，全面招募工作組工作人員
有意者歡迎至水銀貼吧或論壇募集帖回覆
我們期待與您一起創造奇跡
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During the
Spring of my
16th year,

I received
a letter.

And it was
sent to my
home.

封面彩頁50P

orange

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

Why was
it sent ?

And who
sent it...?

「夢中的太陽」的高野苺所裝綴的

新連載

封面彩頁 5●P

A hand in hand miracle.

The Spring of my 16th year.

Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture.

orange

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

有你相伴的每一天與我的未來。

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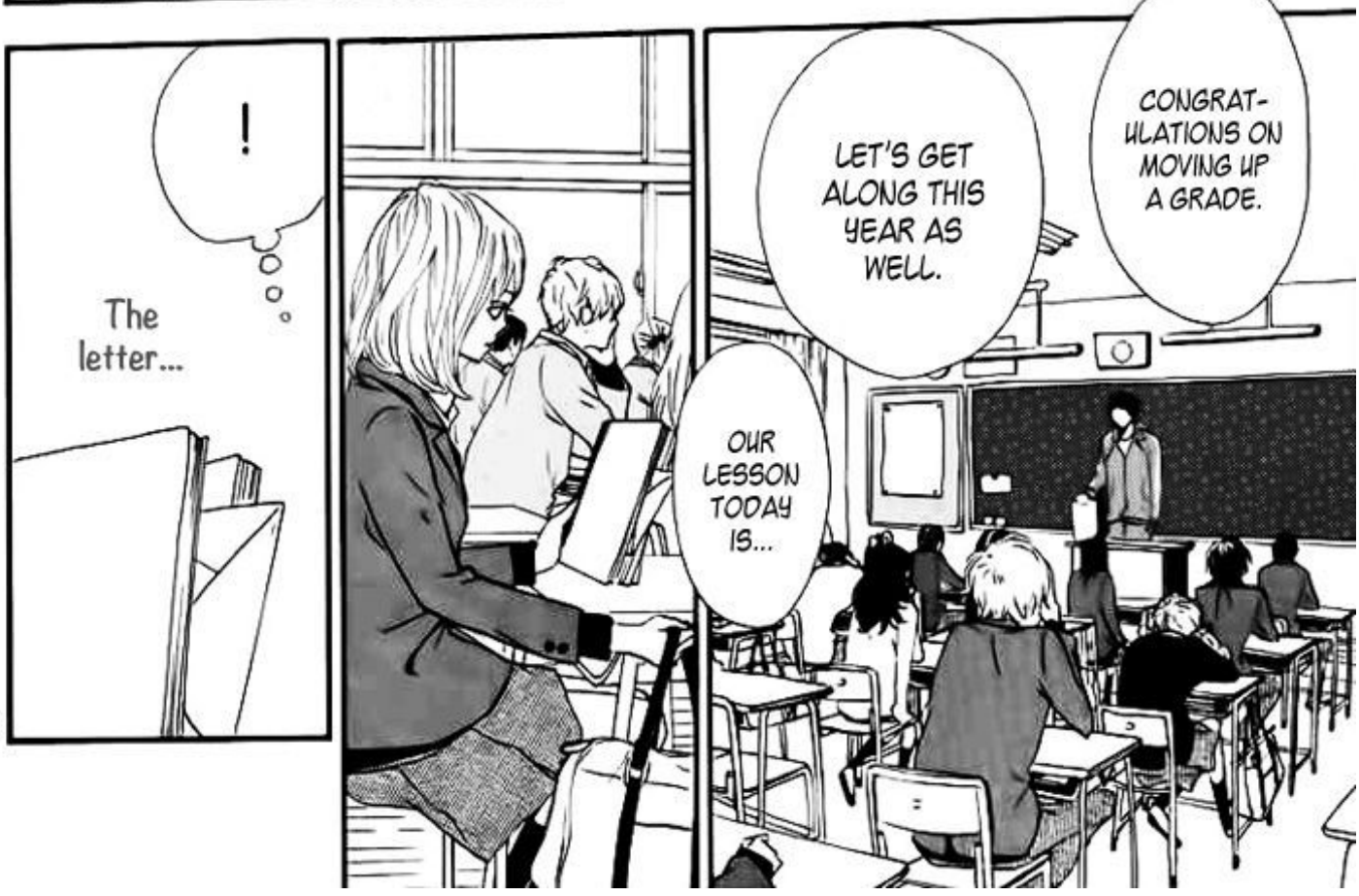
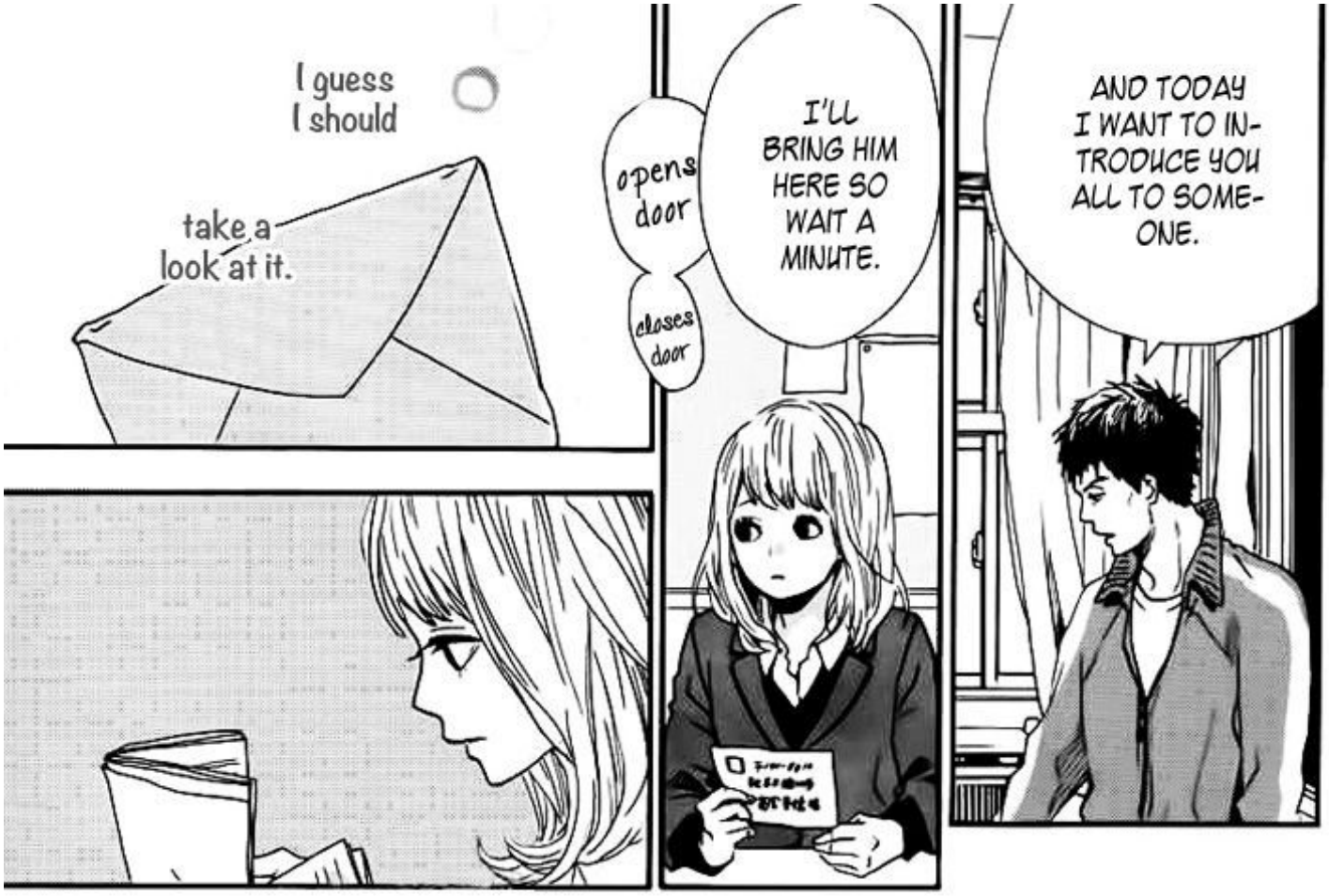
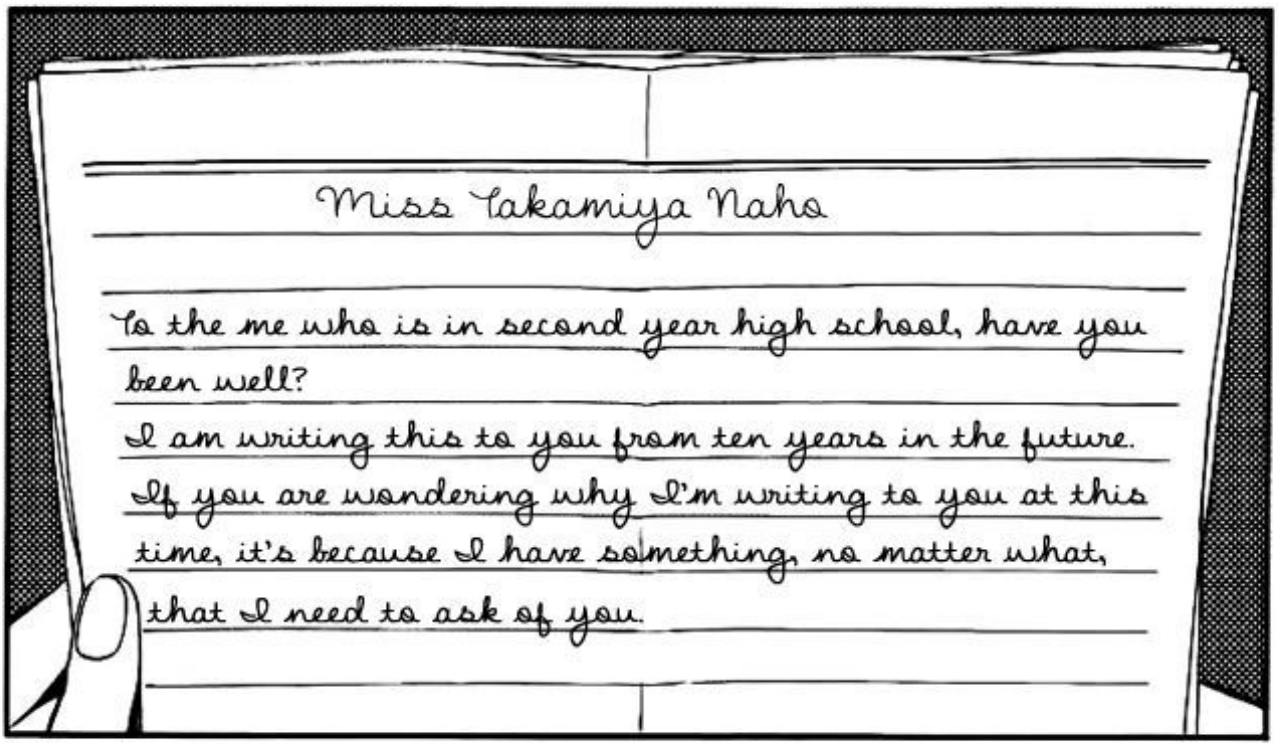
HUH?
Takamiya Naho
IT'S... FROM ME?
OPENS DOOR
OKAY~
NAHO! YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE!

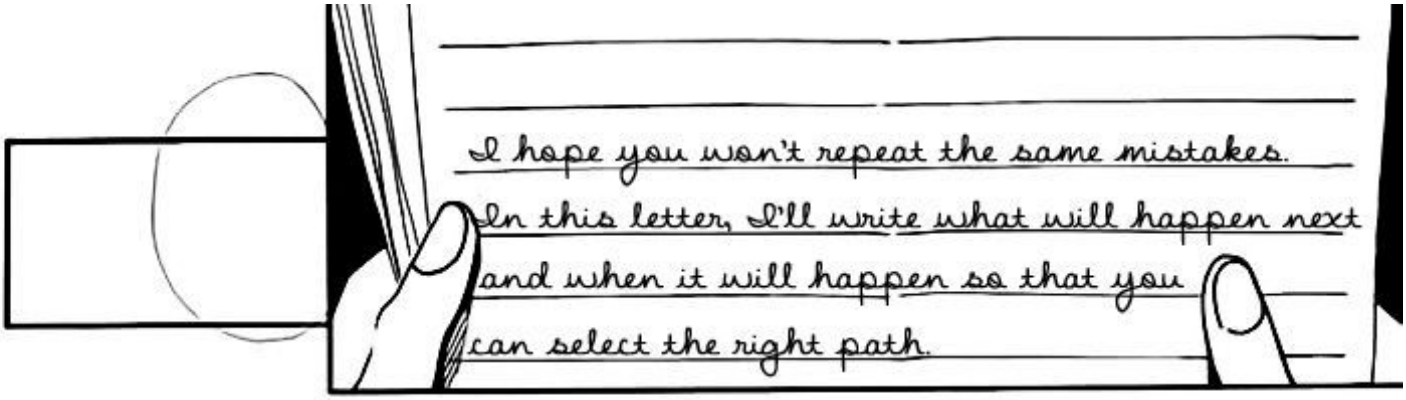
I'LL READ THIS LATER TONIGHT.
April 6th :
The first time I've slept in.
I've thought of what I'm going to write in my diary today.


!
The letter...
LET'S GET ALONG THIS YEAR AS WELL.
CONGRATULATIONS ON MOVING UP A GRADE.
OUR LESSON TODAY IS...


I guess I should take a look at it.
opens door
closes door
I'LL BRING HIM HERE SO WAIT A MINUTE.
AND TODAY I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU ALL TO SOMEONE.

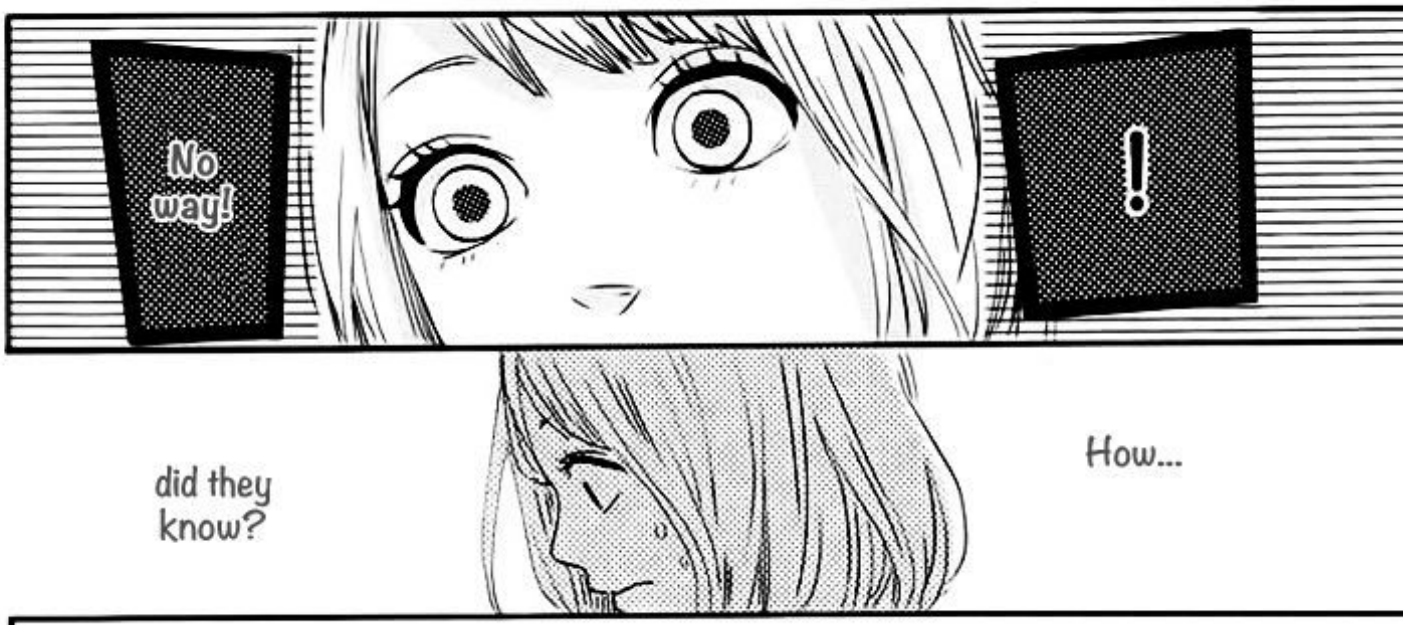

Miss Takamiya Naho
To the me who is in second year high school, have you been well?
I am writing this to you from ten years in the future.
If you are wondering why I'm writing to you at this time, it's because I have something, no matter what, that I need to ask of you.

IS THIS SOME SORT OF PRANK?
AND IT'S "ME"...
10 YEARS IN THE FUTURE ...?



『April 6th』

• In the morning, because you forgot to set your alarm clock for the first time ever, you overslept.



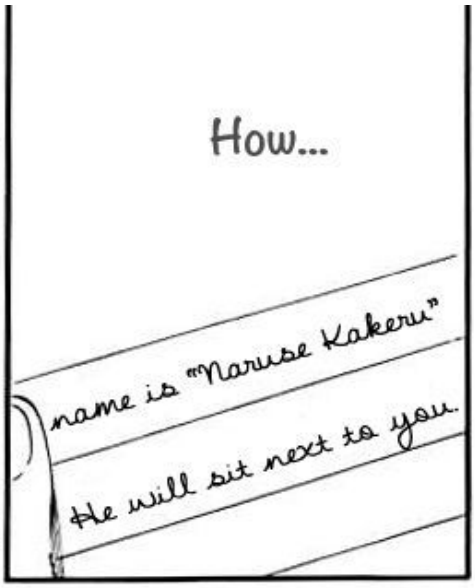
• There will be a student from Tokyo transferring into Class 6. His name is "Naruse Kakeru"

SFX: da da da

Blackboard: Naruse Kakeru

NARUSE COMES FROM TOKYO,
AND IT'S HIS FIRST TIME LIVING IN NAGANO.
NARUSE, INTRODUCE YOURSELF.
9
PLEASE... TAKE CARE OF ME.
It's true?
This...
is really true?

AS FOR YOUR SEAT, YOU CAN SIT NEXT TO TAKAMIYA.


How...
name is "Narise Kakeru"
He will sit next to you.

This must be
a coin-cidence.
This can't be right.
No way.

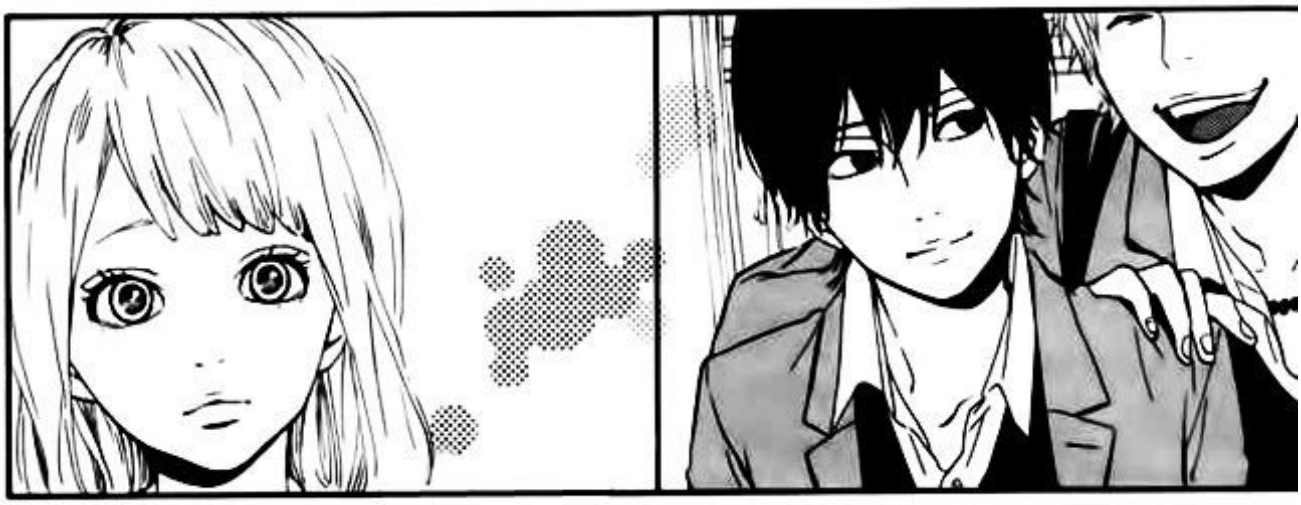
It has to be coin-cidence!

Naho! Let's go home together!
WAH!
DING
DONG
DING
DONG
DING
DING
DONG
AH!
KAKERU!
Eh? Can we? Awe-some!
For lunch, we can go to my house and have some bread!
LET'S GO TOGETHER!

• You'll invite Kakeru to walk home together, but he'll say no.

◎ But I hope that you guys won't invite Kakeru on that day. Absolutely not.

Alright! Let's go to my house!
That's great!
IF IT'S ONLY FOR A BIT...
...
talk about it with the others.
I should
But...
would they believe me?



If we invite him, will there be some sort of problem?
Then let's all introduce ourselves!

KAYANO TAKAKO.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
SHE'S
MURASAKA AZUSA.
You can call me Azusa!
HAGITA SAKU.
YOU CAN CALL ME SUWA!
AND I'M SUWA HIROTO.
TAKAMIYA NAHO.

*No. 2 Azusa: the debut song of boy band Kariudo (which means hunter).

*Matagi: traditional winter hunters of the Tohoku region of northern Japan.

*T/N: Tokkyuazusa: a bullet train in Japan.

*T/N: This may be translated wrong. It has something to do with the lyrics of the song "No. 2 Azusa".

HEH.

KAKERU'S TROUBLED. SEE?

HAHAHA!

What was it?

MATAGI

What made you laugh?

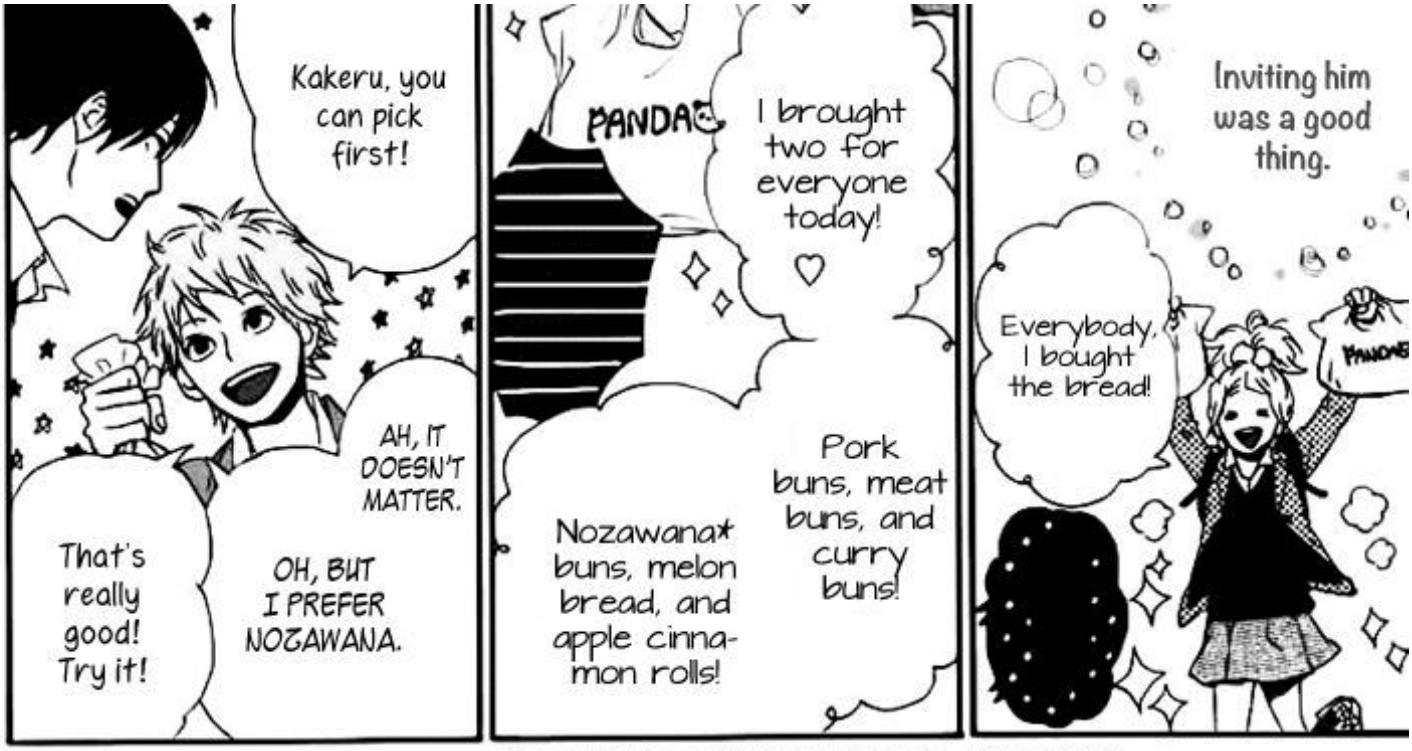
He laughed!

He laughed!

What is this?

This is good.

He smiled



*Nozawana: Japanese leaf vegetable, often pickled.

Naho prefers sweets so she can have a melon bread and an apple cinnamon!

It's really yummy!

Kakeru-kun should take the curry bread!

THEN EVERYONE CAN PICK THE ONE THEY WANT.

Then I want the other No-zawana bun!

I WANT APPLE CINNAMON. ♡

DON'T JOKE WITH ME! I WANT THE NOZA-WANA BUN!

Everyone wants to eat it.

That's great.

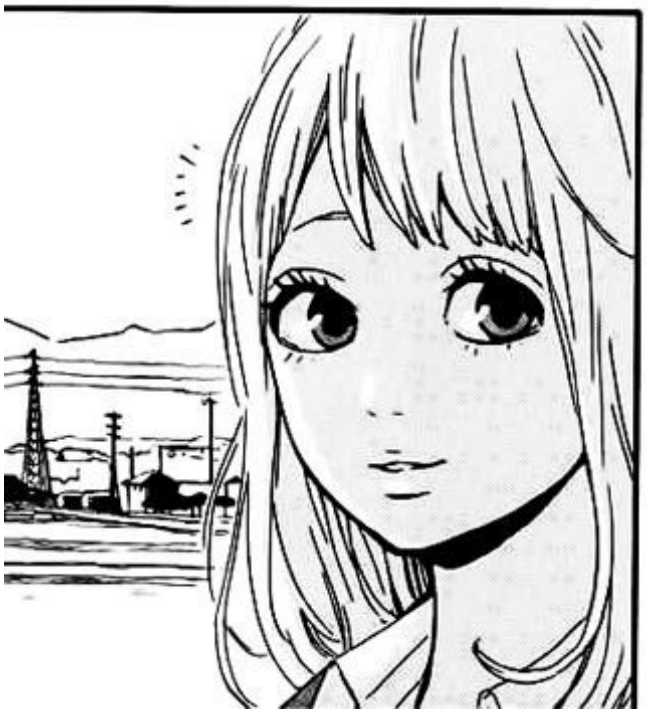
that I didn't say I wanted to the curry bread.

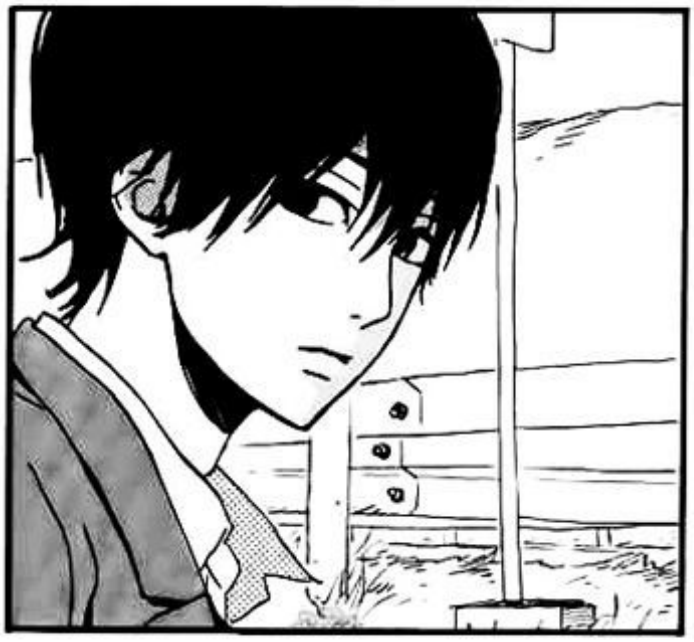
YOU CAN EAT IT WHENEVER YOU WANT!

EH?! I WANT IT!

THEN I'LL TAKE THE CURRY BREAD.

GIVE IT TO ME!





THE CURRY BREAD
I'LL TRADE YOU THE MELON BREAD FOR IT!
MMM... HERE.
THANK YOU.

He noticed it

that he traded with me?

Did I make a face that I wanted the curry bread?

Is it because ....

Perhaps,

he noticed?

April 6th (Friday)

I slept in for the first time in my life.

It was only a half day at school

Transfer student Naruse Kakeru sits next to me

Inviting Kakeru-kun to go home with us, as everyone takes a stroll in the sunset.

*T/N: Calling someone by their first name without honorifics indicates a very close relationship.

I walked behind Kakeru-kun.

BYE!

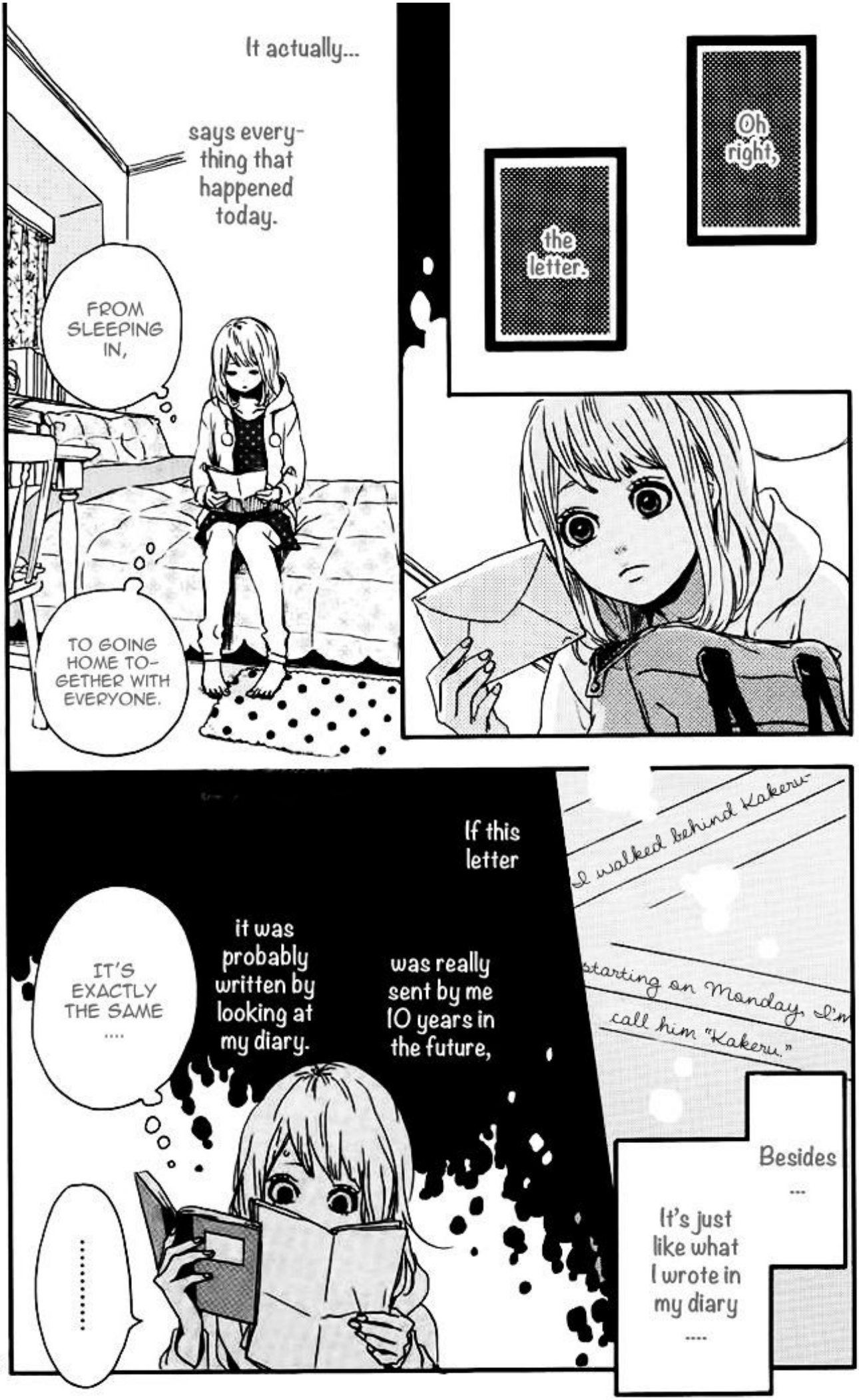
SEE YOU!

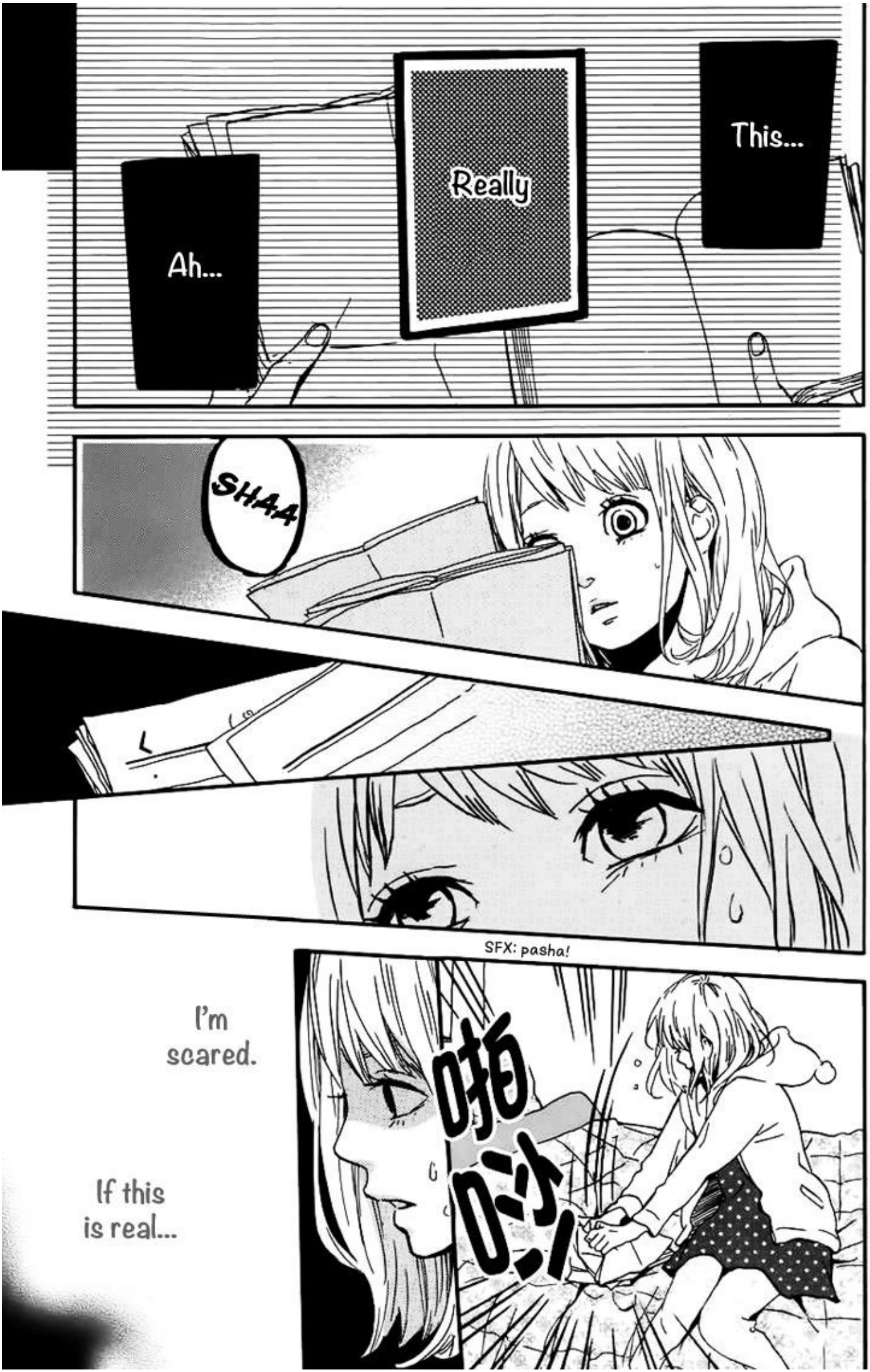
AH!

KAKERU!

CAN I CALL YOU THAT*?

PLEASE CALL ME THAT.
YEAH.
closes
I've decided that starting on Monday, I'll call him "Kakeru."
It was the first
I ever overslept.
Transfer student Narise
Kakeru sits next to me now.
We invited Kakeru-kun to go
home together. Everyone was
walking in the sunset. I was
walking behind Kakeru-kun.
I've decided that starting
on Monday, I'm going to
call him "Kakeru."
Today's diary entry is written,
what else should I write...?


It actually...
says everything that happened today.
FROM SLEEPING IN,
TO GOING HOME TOGETHER WITH EVERYONE.
Oh right,
the letter.
I walked behind Kakeru-
starting on Monday, I'm
call him "Kakeru."
If this letter
was really sent by me 10 years in the future,
it was probably written by looking at my diary.
IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME ....
.....
Besides ...
It's just like what I wrote in my diary ....


Ah...
Really
This...
SHAA
SFX: pasha!
I'm scared.
If this is real...

The future or whatever,

I don't know to know about it.

If it's like that,

then I don't want to see it.

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SFX: Pa-ha
Kakeru -kun didn't come to school.
Perhaps,
I hope you guys won't invite Kakeru on that day
does it have something to do with that...?
The reason why Kakeru -kun hasn't been coming to school,
Maybe...
It's written in this letter...?

『April 20th』

• The big game

• During the softball game, I was asked to be a batter.

◎ I really regret saying no. I hope you won't refuse this time, and accept everyone's request.

• That day, I fell in love with Kakeru.

I think, if that day,
we didn't invite Kakeru-kun,
maybe it could have prevented that scenario from happening.
KAKERU -KUN?!

Kakeru!
AH,
I mean,
EH?! IT'S KAKERU!
Yo~ Kakeru!

EH
SLACKIING OFF.
KAKERU, WHAT HAPPENED THAT YOU WERE ABSENT FOR TWO WEEKS?
it's just like two weeks ago.
Ah,
That's great.

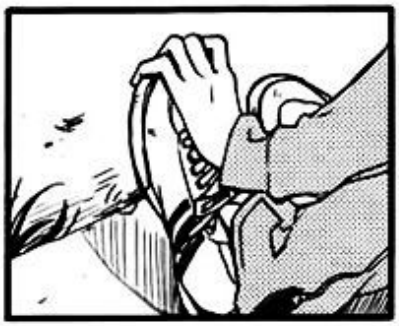
That's all there is to it?
COME CHEER US ON!
THEN WE'RE GOING TO OUR GAME!
Slacking off?
WE SHOULD BE SAY-ING THAT ...

AH...
NO. I'M IN CHARGE OF FIRST AID.
EH? WHY?
I DIDN'T COME TO SCHOOL SO I COULDN'T PRACTICE.

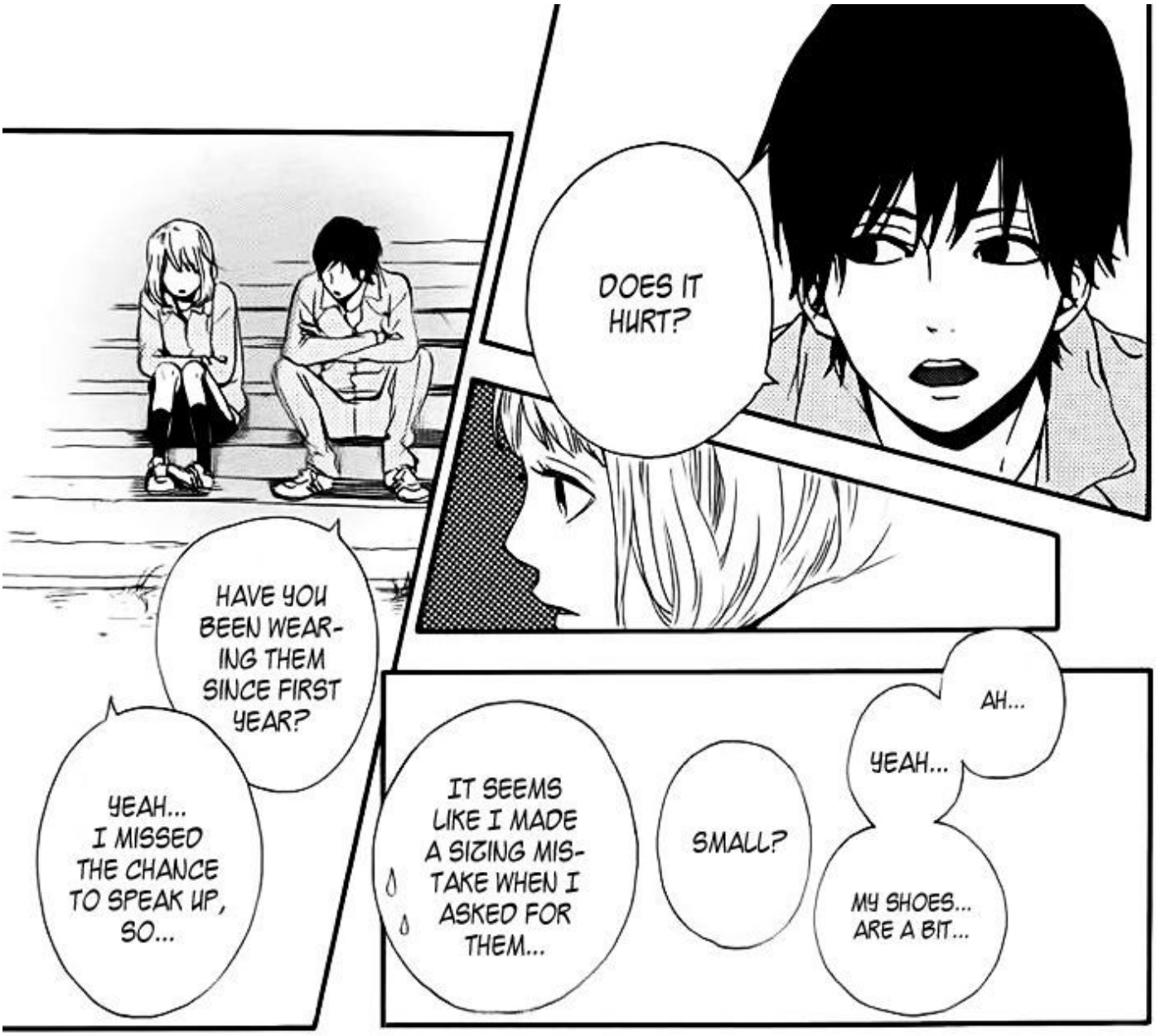
HER PITCHING IS GREAT!
Everything's okay since Naho's here!
Relax, relax!
WAH!
RUN FASTER!

Kyaa~ Hagita~
KAKERU, ARE YOU PARTICIPATING?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR FOOT?
EH...?



So serious.
THAT KIND OF THING DOESN'T MATTER.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SOFTBALL.


DOES IT HURT?
HAVE YOU BEEN WEARING THEM SINCE FIRST YEAR?
YEAH... I MISSED THE CHANCE TO SPEAK UP, SO...
AH...
YEAH...
MY SHOES... ARE A BIT...
SMALL?
IT SEEMS LIKE I MADE A SIZING MISTAKE WHEN I ASKED FOR THEM...

SUWA IS IN THE SOCCER GAME?
AH, YEAH.
HE'S REALLY GOOD.

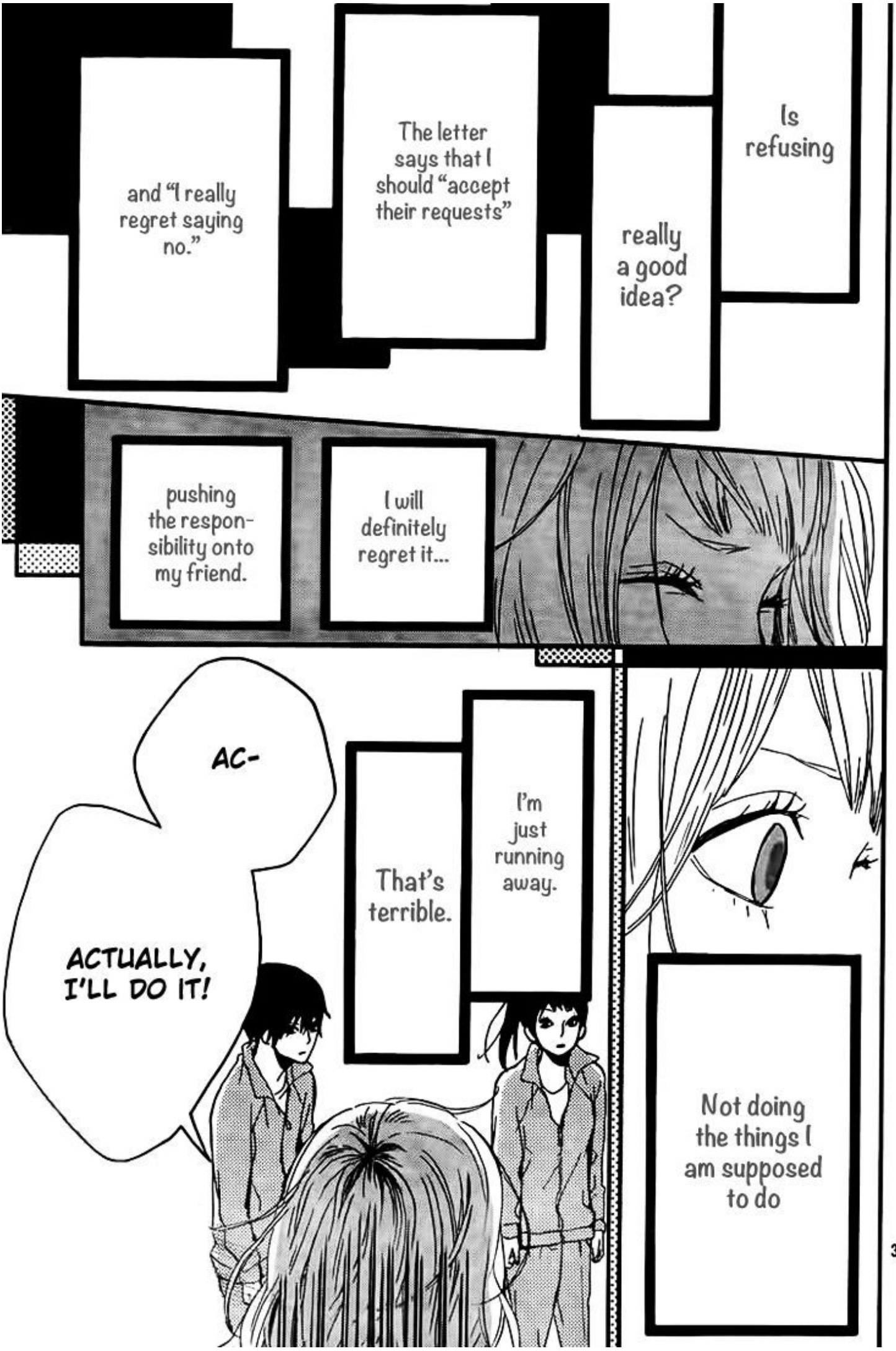
HMM... MMM.

"Really good" ...?
Ahh~
Hagita really sucks~
TOTALLY CAN'T TELL ....
.....
The game is almost over!
Naho~
Group 6
VS
Group 3
5
6
NAHO, THIS IS OUR ONE AND ONLY RE-QUEST!
PLEASE BE OUR SUB-STITUTE BATTER!

Being on the softball team or whatever was from middle school
2 bases loaded ....
If I hit it then we'll win.
Naho, all you have to do is hit a home run and we'll win!
I can't! Under such circum-stances!
It really came!
IF IT'S NAHO FROM THE SOFT-BALL TEAM THEN IT'S NO PROB-LEM!
I...
I can't...
But if I don't
Then we'll lose...
Even if I went out,
we'd definitely lose.
Eh?!
Please, Naho~
I can't...
I'm... sorry.
Everyone has expec-tations for me,
but I don't have confi-dence.
I'M TOO NERV-OUS...

NO... I'M NOT HURT
I'M THE ONE... TO BLAME...
EH...?
WHEN...
NAHO IS HURT?
SHE HURT HER FOOT.
DON'T PRESSURE HER.
!
Then...
I'll do it!

"After Azusa takes my place on the field, we lost the game."
The letter says
But there's a chance I may strikeout, so you'll have to forgive me~
.....


and "I really regret saying no."
The letter says that I should "accept their requests"
Is refusing really a good idea?
pushing the respon-sibility onto my friend.
I will definitely regret it...
AC-
ACTUALLY, I'LL DO IT!
That's terrible.
I'm just running away.
Not doing the things I am supposed to do

The "present" me doesn't want that feeling to stay with me for ten years.
IT'LL BE OKAY!
IT'S OKAY!
No...
HEY, YOUR LEG!
NAHO...?
Who cares about my leg? It's not a problem at all.
The pain will go away eventually.
But a regretful heart
won't change for another ten years

SFX: pa!
啪
"The first ball is a curve ball."
SO SLOW
I CAN HIT IT...!
The letter says
that it's a ball I can definitely hit.
"A low angle ball."
"The second pitch is a fast-ball."
SFX: shuu
咻
I can hit it.

SFX: pang dang dang

home run!
SHAA!
SFX: kyaa
NAHO!
YOU'RE AMAZING!
This is great
The me who has always been weak and timid,

for the first time,

has succeeded.

Naho!

Run~ You need to step on the home plate!

Ah!

Group 6 VS Group 3

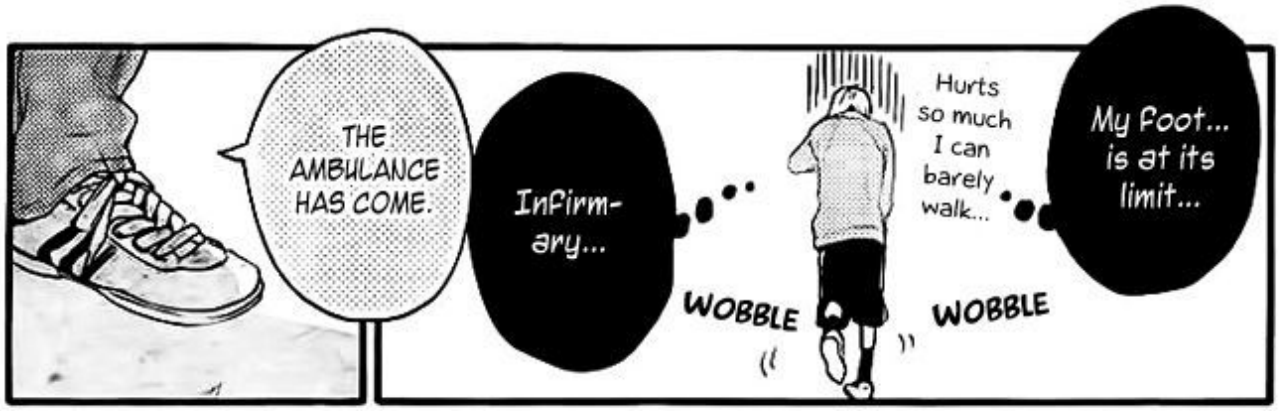
9 6

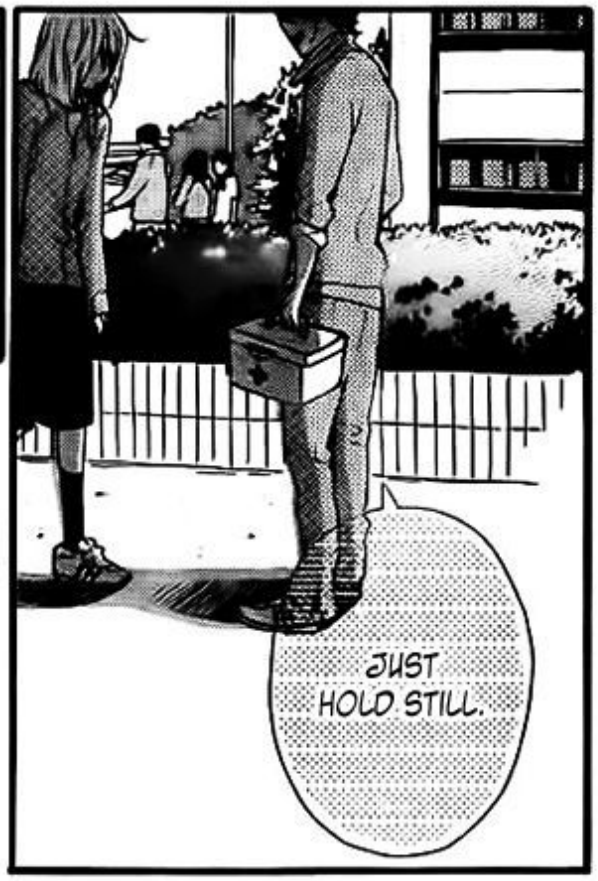
The softball game was won by our class. And Suwa's soccer game,

because of Suwa's spectacular performance, was won by them as well.

NAHO, LET'S GO BACK TO CLASS.

SORRY, YOU GUYS GO FIRST.


THE AMBULANCE HAS COME.
Infirm-ary...
WOBBLE
Hurts so much I can barely walk...
WOBBLE
My foot... is at its limit...


JUST HOLD STILL.

LET ME SEE YOUR FOOT.
It-
It's okay.
SIT DOWN.

OW!
NEED TO DISINFECT IT.

AHH,
SO IT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR SHOE.

*T/N: P.E stands for Physical Education. Or gym class.

IF YOU ARE ALWAYS SUPPRESSING YOURSELF,

THE ONLY ONE MISSING OUT IS YOU.

IT WAS A LITTLE BIT TOO LATE TO COMPLAIN ABOUT MY SHOES,

SO I JUST ENDURED IT.

IF YOUR SHOE ISN'T THE RIGHT SIZE YOU NEED TO SPEAK UP.

...OKAY.

BUT FOR P.E.* IT WON'T AFFECT MUCH.

IF IT'S GOING TO CAUSE THE PEOPLE NEXT TO ME ANY TROUBLE,

THEN I'D RATHER SUFFER ON MY OWN.

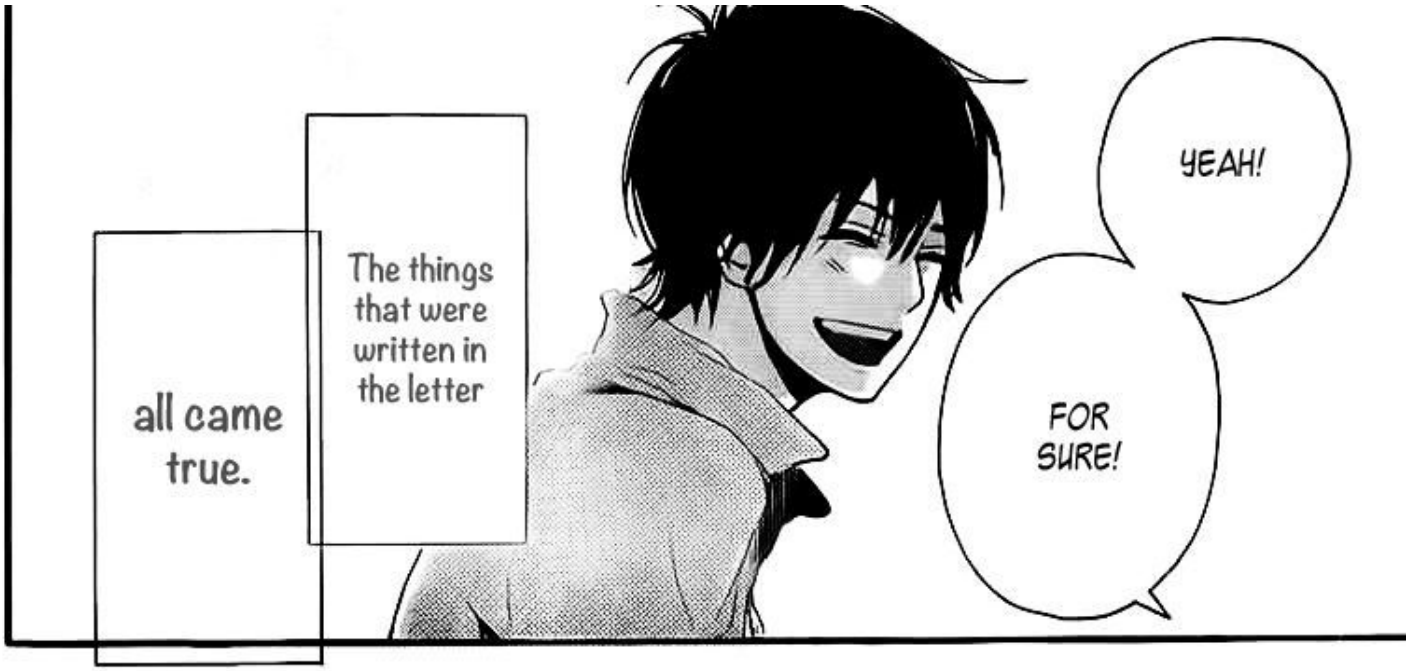
NOBODY NOTICED ANYWAY SO IF I ENDURED IT ON MY OWN, THEN IT WON'T GO BY MUCH FASTER.

IT WAS ALWAYS LIKE THIS.

I SAW IT
AND
I NOTICED.

So he did notice ...
ALRIGHT,
BE CARE-FUL.
THANK YOU.
MMM.
KAKERU TOO!
IF YOU WANTED TO PLAY SOCCER, THEN YOU SHOULD JUST SAY IT!
BECAUSE I AM ALSO LOOKING AT YOU, KAKERU!

I'M LOOKING AT YOU!
THAT HOME RUN JUST NOW WAS PRETTY COOL.
NEXT YEAR, I'LL DEFINITELY PARTICIPATE.
JUST WATCH! I'LL PLAY EVEN BETTER THAN SUWA!



• That day, I fell in love with Kakeru.

The me living 10 years in the future,

I was happy to hear him say

has she let go of this regret?

"I noticed."

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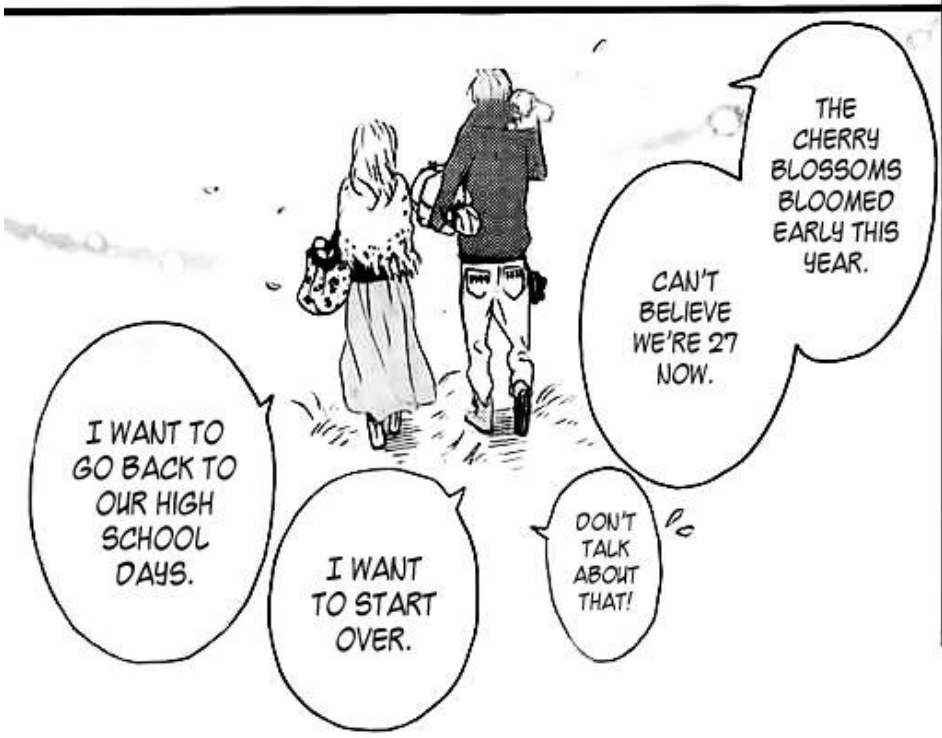

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there are a lot of happy and joyful things that are waiting for you.

To the me ten years in the past,

I hope you can cherish this happiness.

And don't let that happiness die.

Finally, I want to tell you the most important reason for writing this letter.

The 26-year-old me, walked away with many, many regrets.

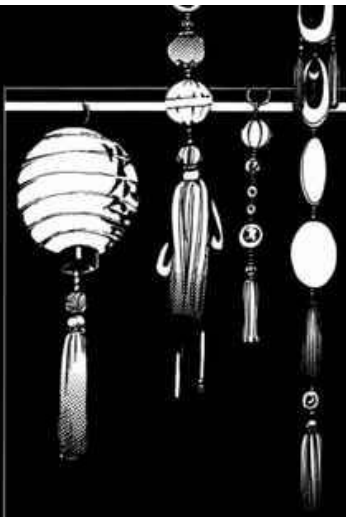
I'm writing this letter because I don't want the 10-year-old me to carry a lifetime of regret.

Ten years later,
Kakeru is already no longer with us.

Please don't just let the important things go by so easily.

And please, watch over Kakeru closely.

To be Continued



3月新連載第2彈

orange

新連載陸續登場中
全面招募工作組工作人員
有意者歡迎至水銀貼吧或論壇募集帖回覆
我們期待與您一起創造奇跡

To be continued。

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Day of the River

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Orange (Takano Ichigo)

chapter 1

RAW SCANS: Mercury Studio
EDITING: HeeJoo
TRANSLATING: HeeJoo
TYPESETTING: HeeJoo
PROOFREADING: HeeJoo

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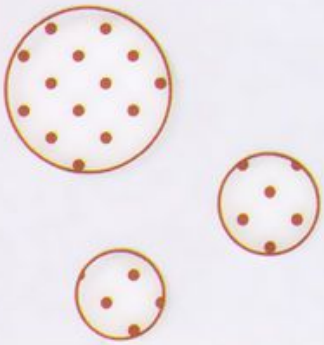

BETSUMA SPRING FILE
ICHIGO TAKANO
2012年 別冊マーガレット
5月超特大号ふろく

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Orange

【オレンジ】

1/ LETTER 2

43P

Glittering Youth and a creaking future.

Second chapter of the new series with a big response!!

The days you were there and my future.

THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS.

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

MC「夢みる太陽」全10巻は大好評発売中です!!

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Ten years in the future, Kakeru isn't here.

NAHO!

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO HEAD TO SCHOOL!

CREEK

PATTAN

Takamiya Naho

orange STORY AND CHARACTERS

Naruse Kakeru

Takamiya Naho

SUPPORT TAKANO ICHIGO BY PURCHASING THIS MANGA WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

Suwa Hiroto

Murasaka Azusa

Hagita Saku

China Takako

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『April 23rd』

- Kakeru joined the soccer club as a temporary player.

- He told us his Mom doesn't make him a lunch, so I said that I would make him one and bring it the next day.

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Ten years in the future, Kakeru isn't here.

That is the only part that I can't believe.

KAKERU...

DIED?

KA-KERU!!!

SURE!

YOU BUSY TODAY?

UH...WHY?

NAHO!

COME SHOPPING WITH US ON THE WAY HOME.

♬

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PURCHASING THIS MANGA WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

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THAT YOU SAID YOU WERE BETTER AT SOCCER THAN I AM?

GASP

WON'T YOU COME CHECK OUT THE SOCCER CLUB?!

"WHY"? I HEARD, YA KNOW.

EH...WHY?

??

RIGHT, NAHO?

EH

YE-

YEAH...

SO-SORR-

NAHO!

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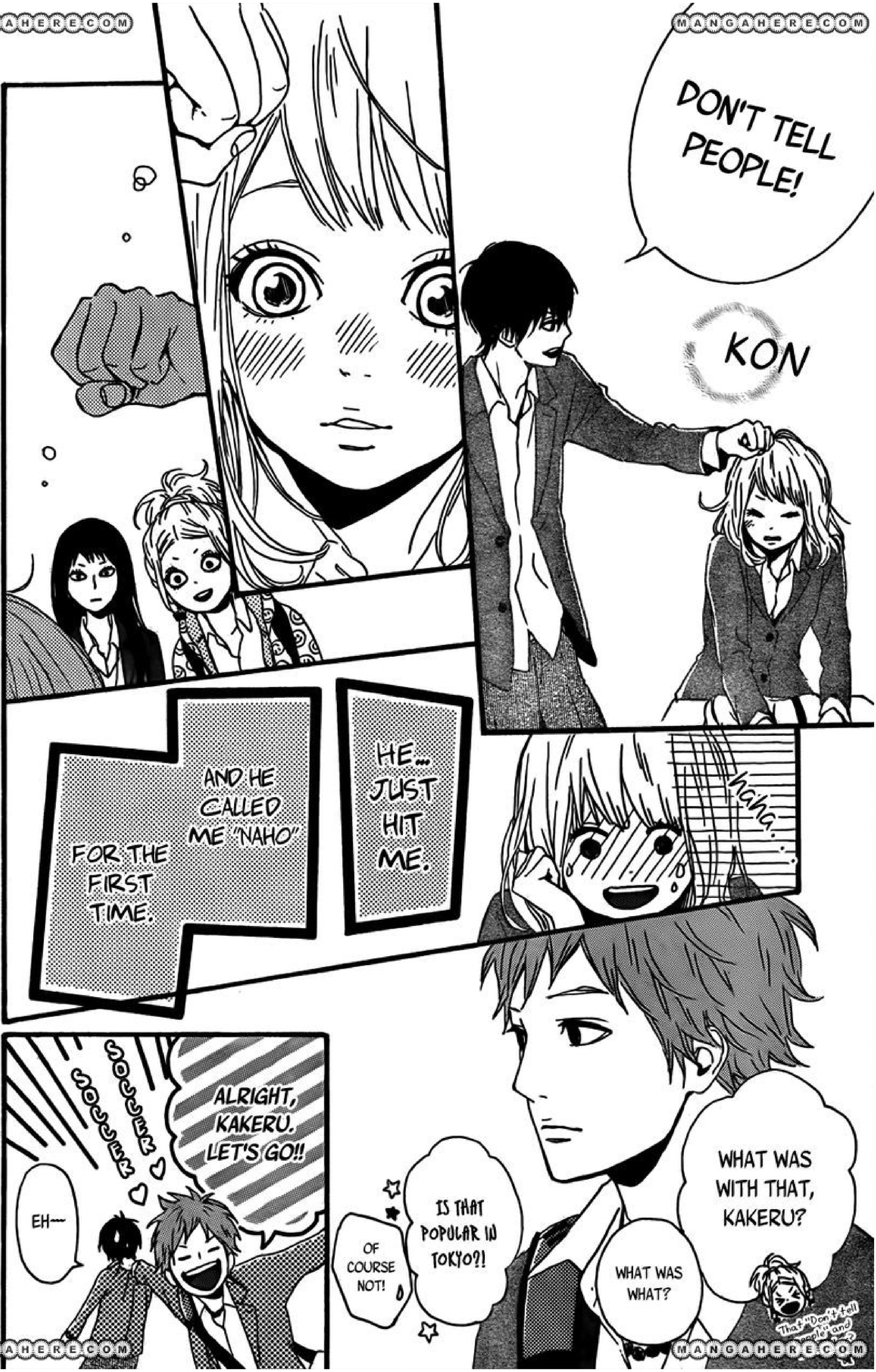

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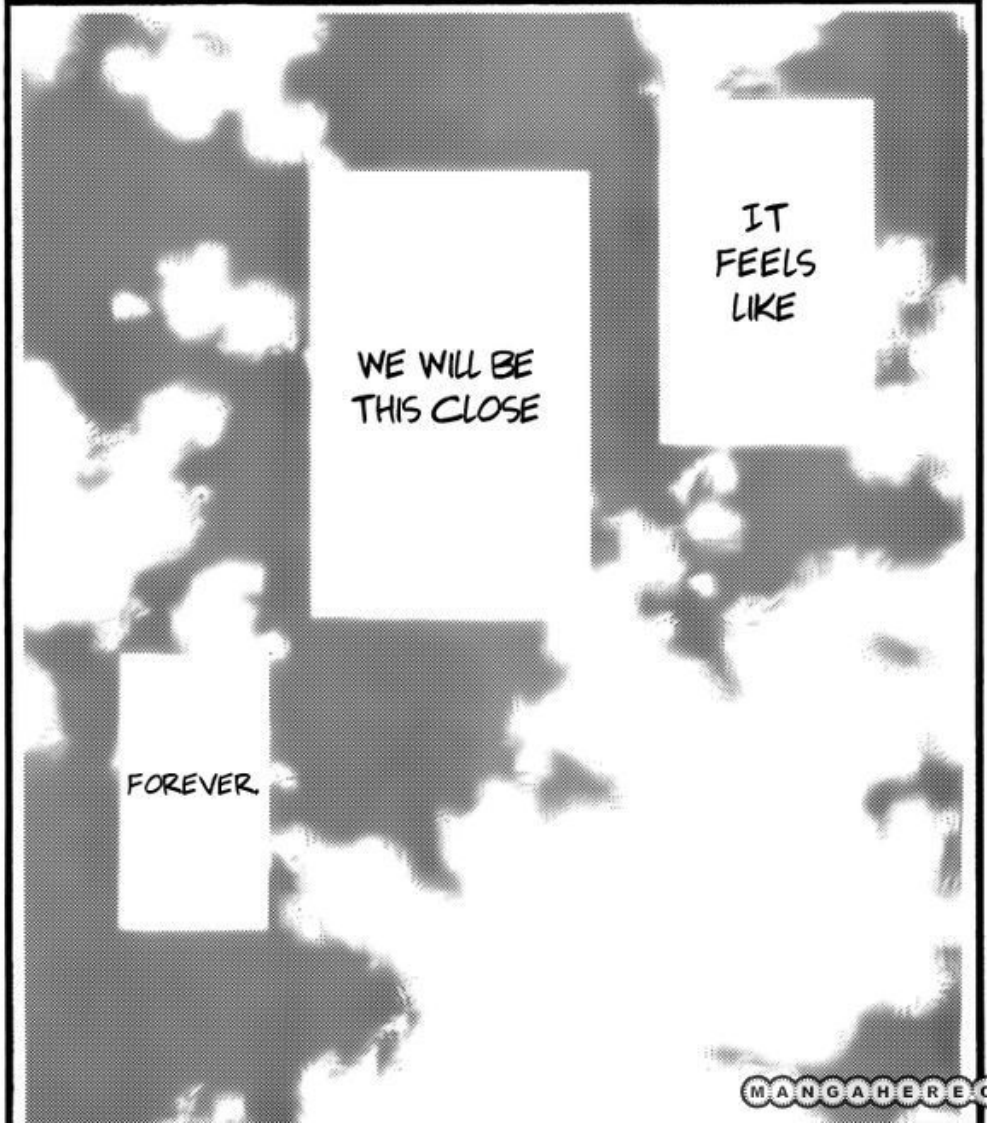

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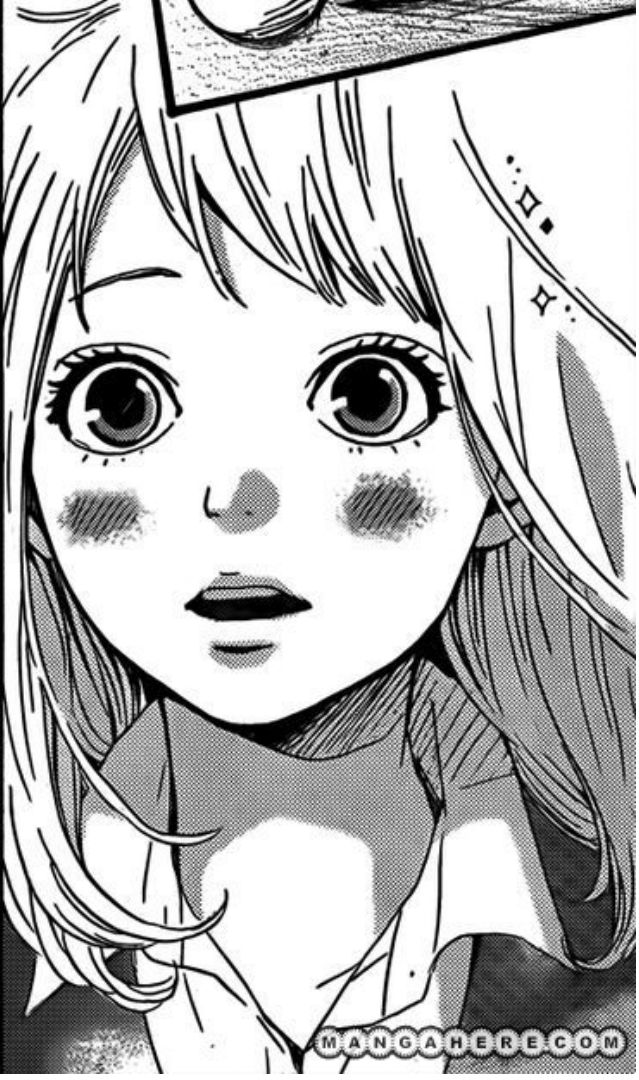

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KAKERU IS GREAT, BUT DID YOU SEE ME?!

IT'S THANKS TO MY PASSING THAT HE SCORED!

Right?

Right.

WE SAW YOUR GOAL! SO YOU'VE PLAYED BEFORE.

KAKERU, YOU'RE REALLY GOOD!!

YEAH, SINCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

You're great!

SHAA

☆KYAA!!☆

That's true, but...

TAKAKO.

Yep Yep.

THE GUY WHO SCORES IS THE COOL ONE.

YEAH, WELL,

BUT I...SUCK AT WAKING UP, I CAN'T MAKE IT TO MORNING PRACTICE!

THE TEAM SAID THAT YOU SHOULD JOIN, TOO.

They'll get angry if you don't.

OKAY?

Okay!

THEN JUST JOIN AS A TEMPORARY PLAYER! YOU ONLY COME IN THE AFTERNOON!

KAKERU'S JOINING THE CLUB STARTING TOMORROW.

WHA- I NEVER SAID THAT.

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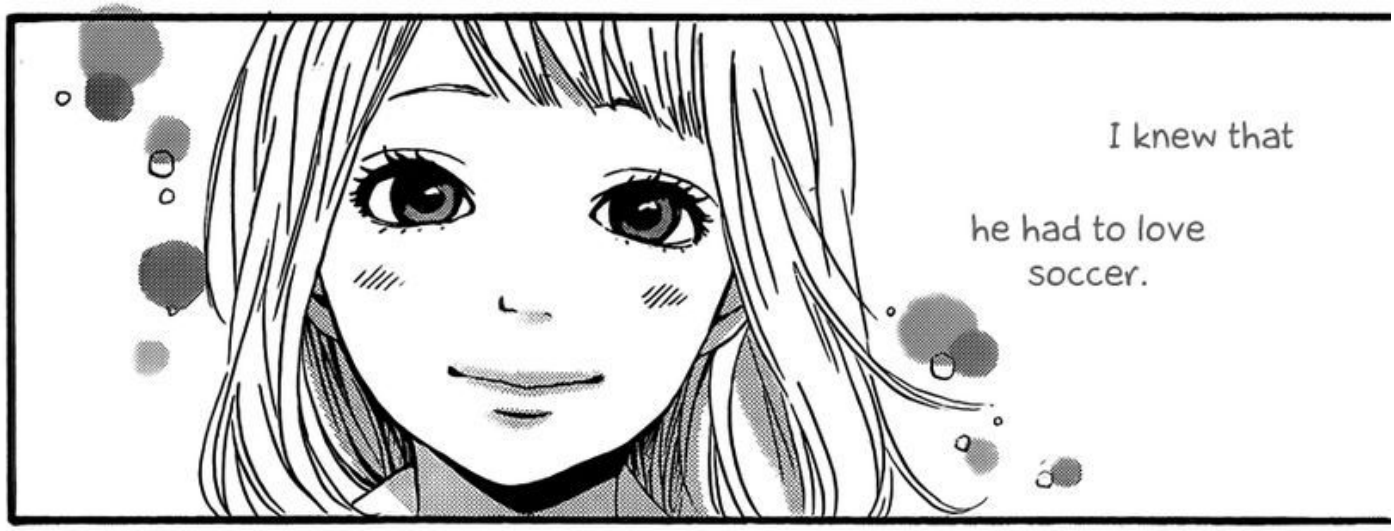

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So it would be weird.

It's just

He said he was "kidding,"

Then I won't.

Right.

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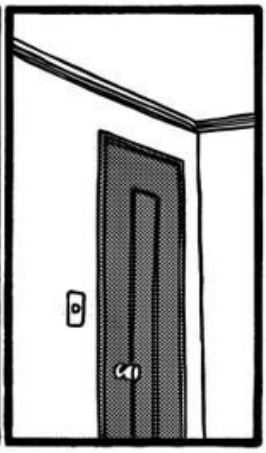
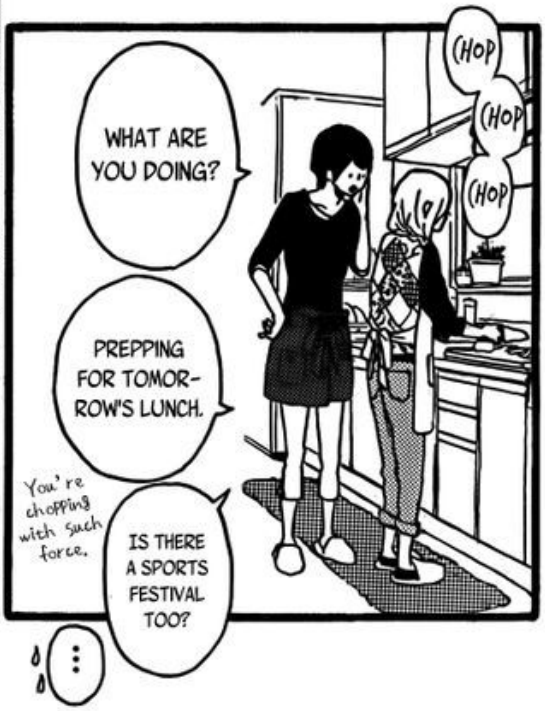
• But I didn't do it in the end.

Make it and give it to him or you'll regret it.

◎ April 24th, I want you to make him lunch.





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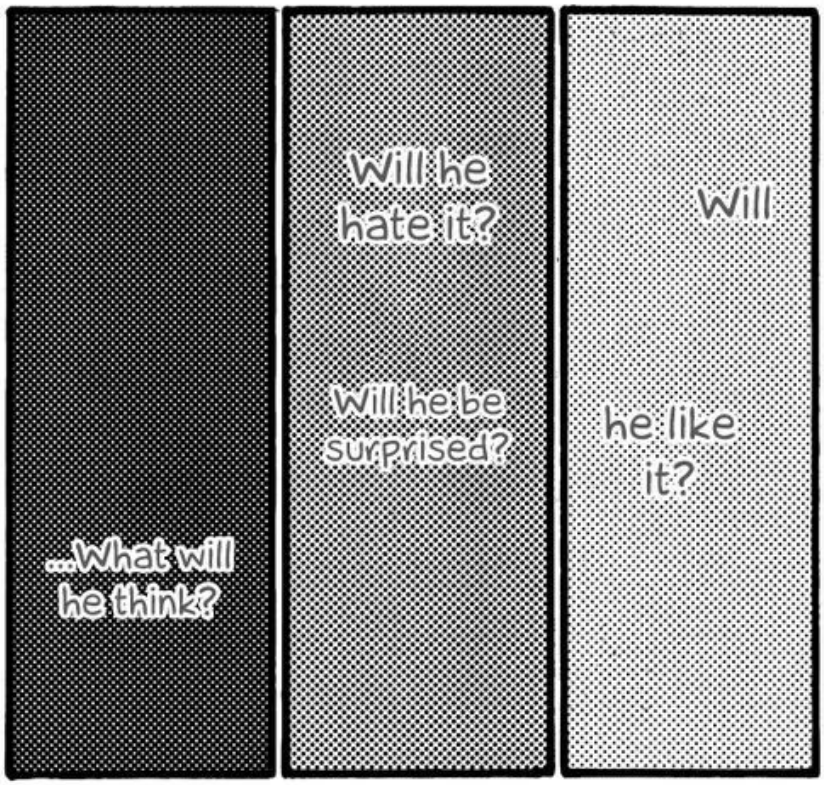
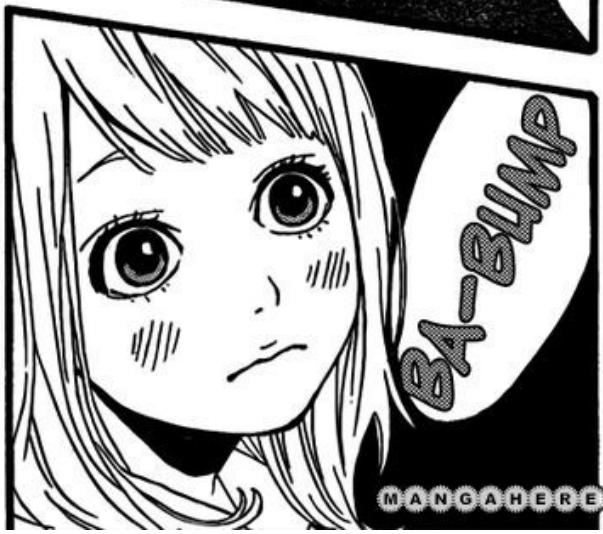


Alright!

I'll just wait till lunch and put it on his desk (and then run).

It'll be fine if it's weird.

It'll be fine. *FINE!*



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"Kakeru,"

"I made your lunch."

I COULDN'T SAY IT.

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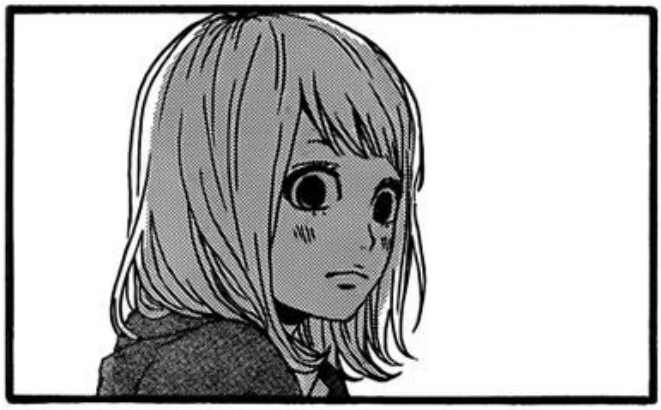

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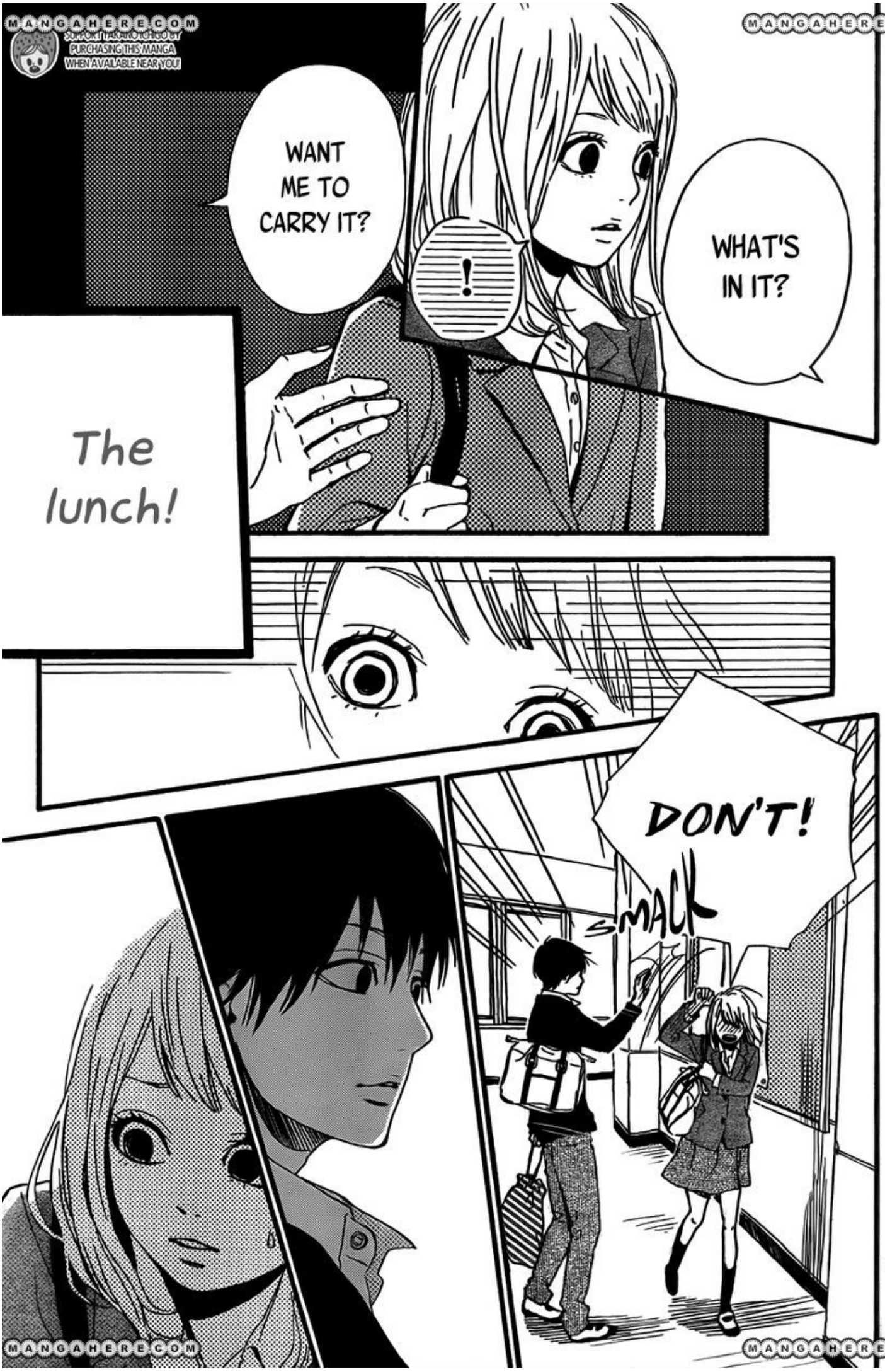

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If I hadn't made that lunch...

...If it wasn't for that letter...

I wish

It's my personality!

I hadn't read that letter.

This isn't something that can change easily.

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WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

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NAHO!

LET'S HEAD HOME TO-GETHER!

THEN, I'LL JUST GO ON AHEAD.

UH...

I'LL ASK TOMORROW.

LATER, NAHO!

AH...

WHAT'LL I DO?

THIS WASN'T IN THE LETTER.

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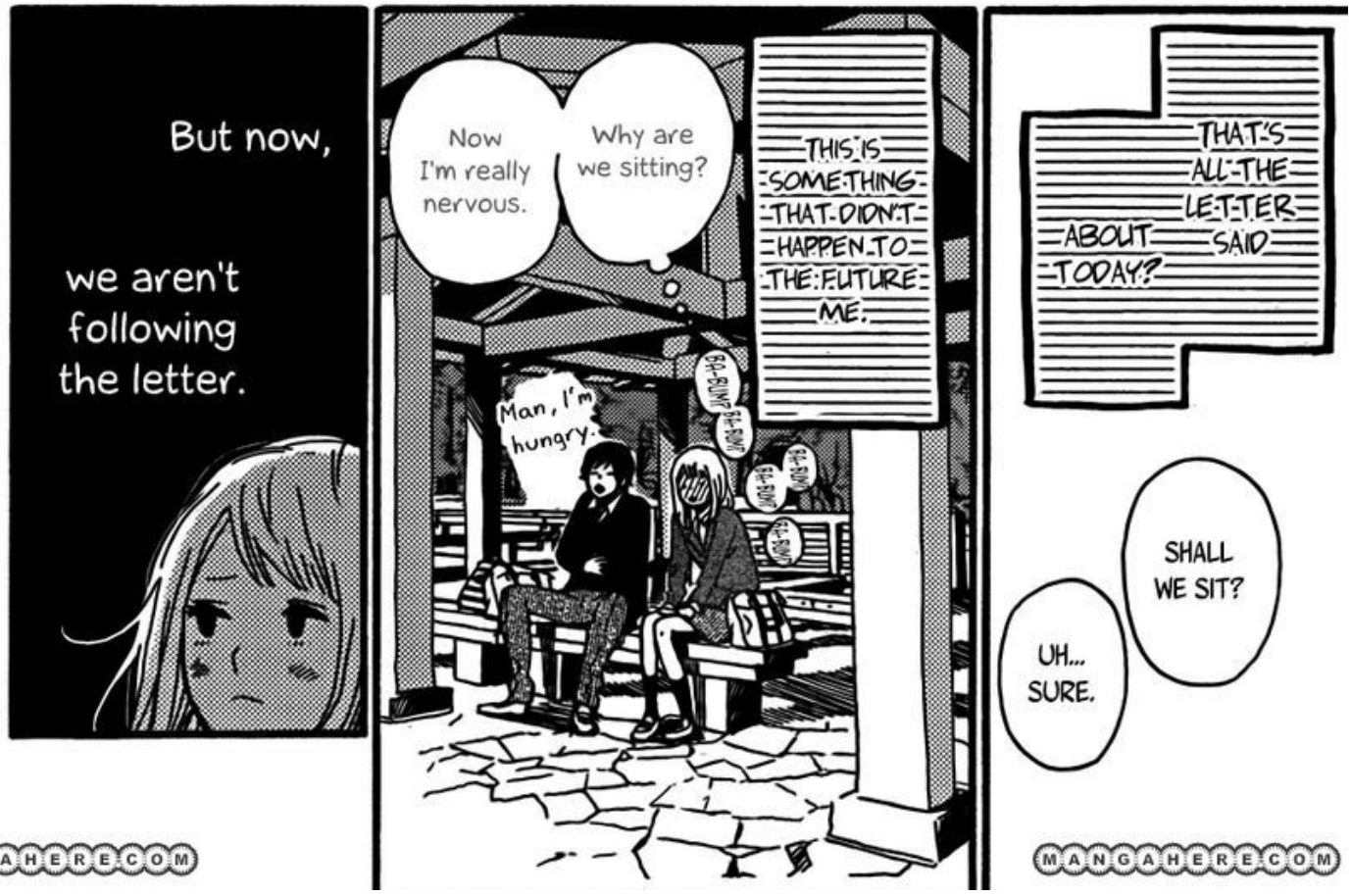
• I want you to help Kakeru whenever he looks troubled.



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I don't know what will happen... It's scary.

WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO AFTER YOU GET HOME?

I... USUALLY HELP MY MOM

WITH DINNER.

WHAT ABOUT HOBBIES?

THERE'S NOTHING YOU LIKE TO DO?

CLEAN, I GUESS.

HA HA

He is always laughing.

SINCE HE WAS ASKING SO MANY QUESTIONS,

I THOUGHT IT WAS OKAY FOR ME TO ASK SOME AS WELL.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

WHAT DO YOU DO AT HOME?

VIDEO GAMES.

YOU LIKE THAT?

YEP.

THEN YOU WERE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES

FOR THAT TWO WEEK VACATION YOU TOOK?

YEAH.

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I THOUGHT IT WAS OKAY FOR ME TO ASK HIM STUFF.

I PROMISED MOM...I WOULDN'T JOIN A CLUB.

'CAUSE KAKERU HAD SO MANY QUESTIONS FOR ME.

SO

I WAS ABSENT FOR THE FUNERAL AND THE MOVE.

SORRY...FOR TALKING ABOUT SUCH STRANGE STUFF.

SORRY...

THAT I ASKED.

BUT IT'S NOT STRANGE.

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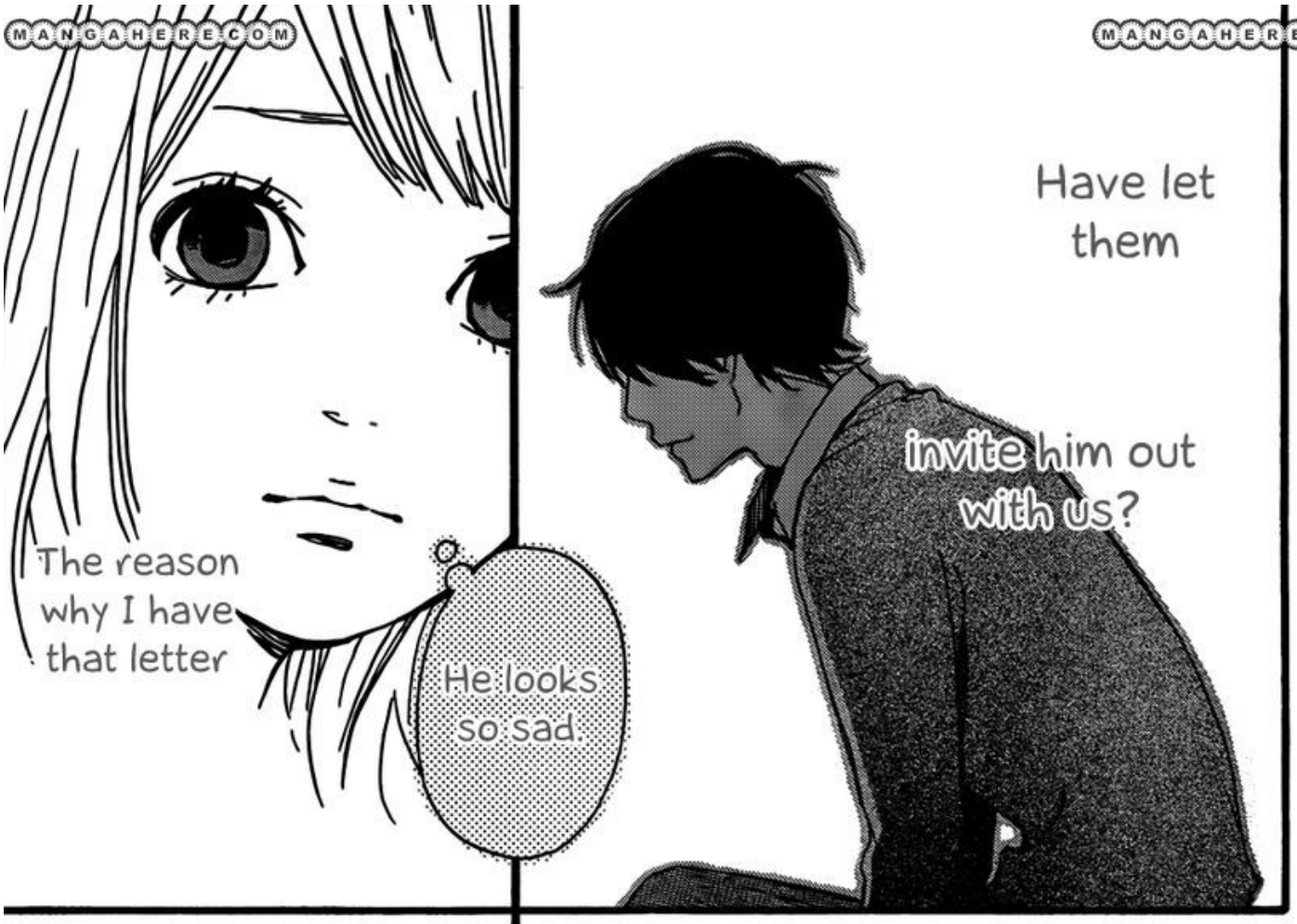

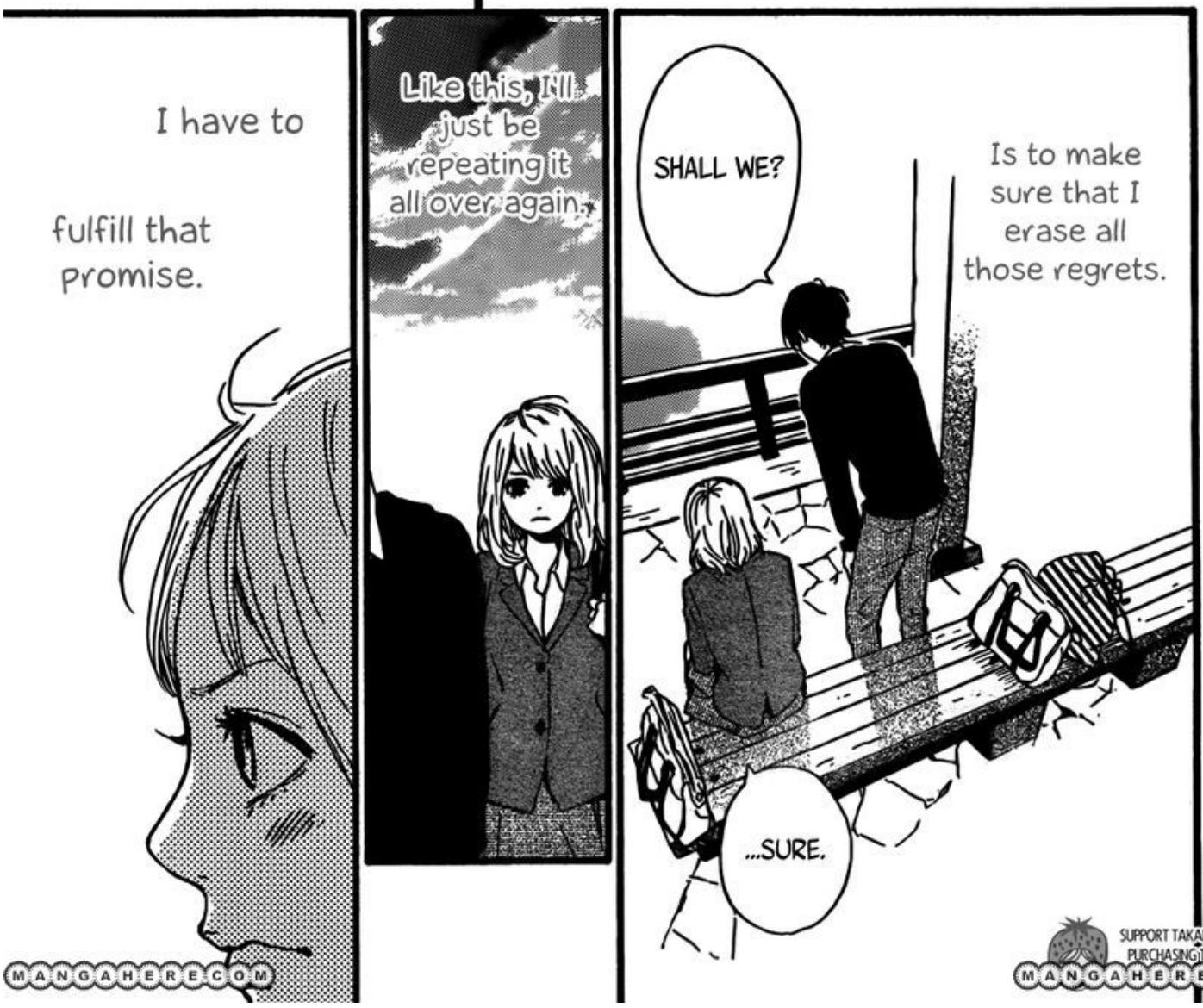

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I...DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL LIKE IT BUT,

HERE!

I PLANNED TO GIVE IT TO YOU AT LUNCH,

BUT I DIDN'T.

Should I disappear?

Run far away?

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THANK YOU!

NAHO.

On the way home, Kakeru held that lunch and smiled.

He looked like he was about to cry.

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YOU ARE SUCH A MOM.

HIS SMILE

REMAINS

TEN YEARS FROM NOW,

FOR-EVER AND

EVER.

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SORRY FOR MAKING YOU BRING THE CAR.

IT'S TOTALLY ALRIGHT.

IT'S FINE. I'M DRIVING.

T/N: I can't tell if it's a boy or a girl. ^_^;

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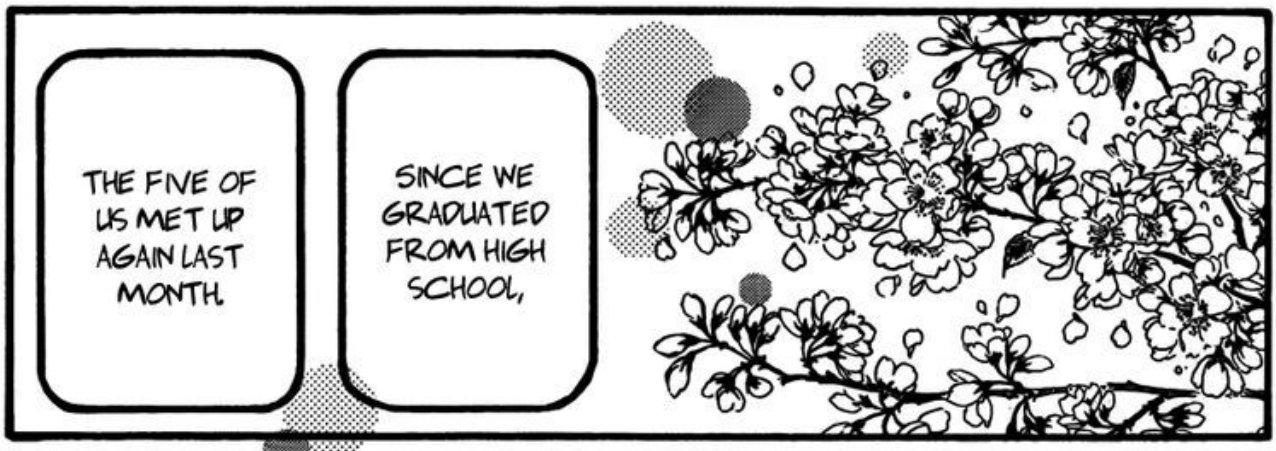

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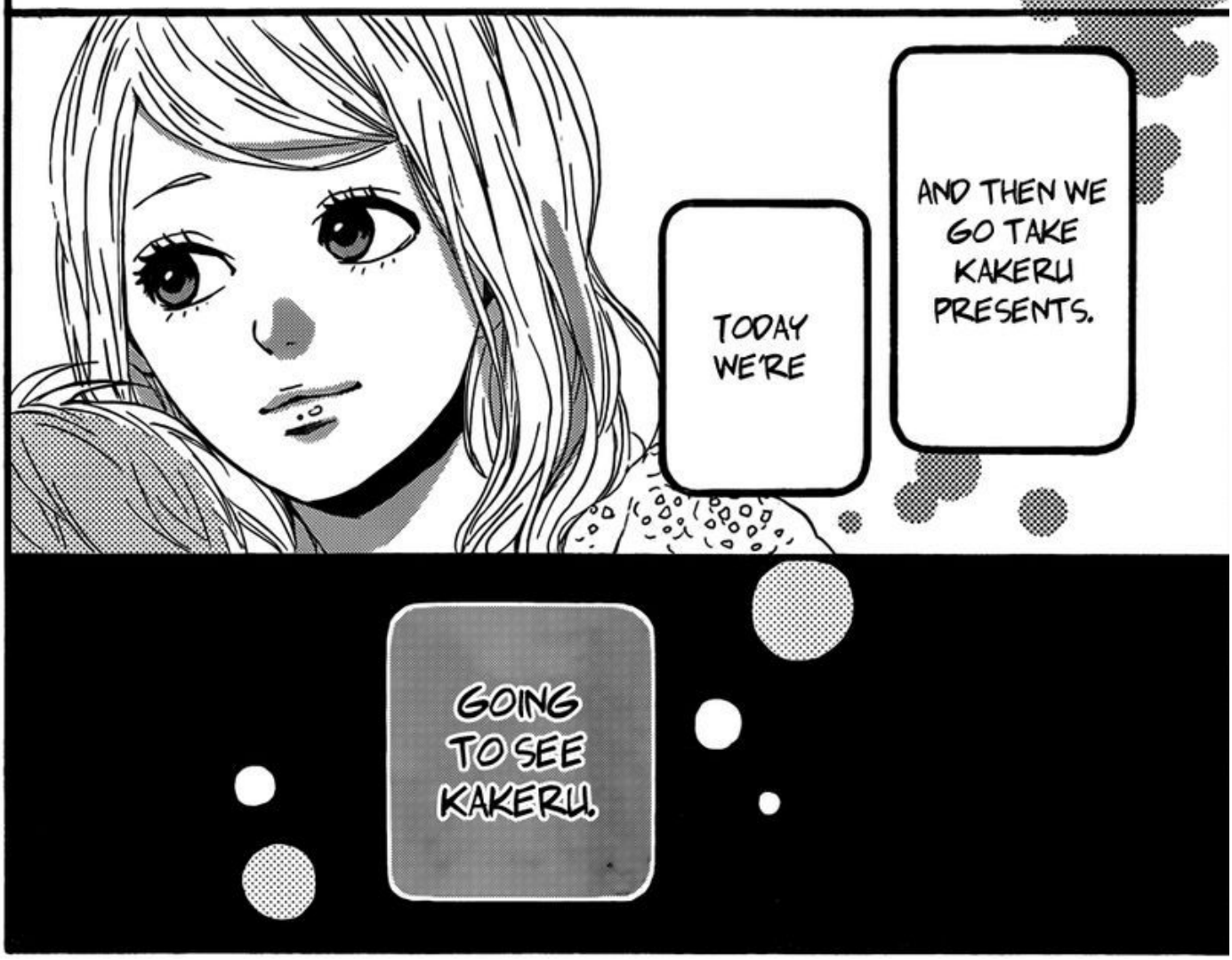

THE FEELINGS THAT DIDN'T REACH HIM

AND THE PROMISE I COULDN'T FULFILL.

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Ten years in the future, Kakeru isn't here.
I don't want to lose something so precious.
Please watch Kakeru closely.

NAHO, DINNER'S READY.

Kakeru

Died in an accident the winter he was 17.

And we made a promise.

Saving Kakeru is

Our penance.

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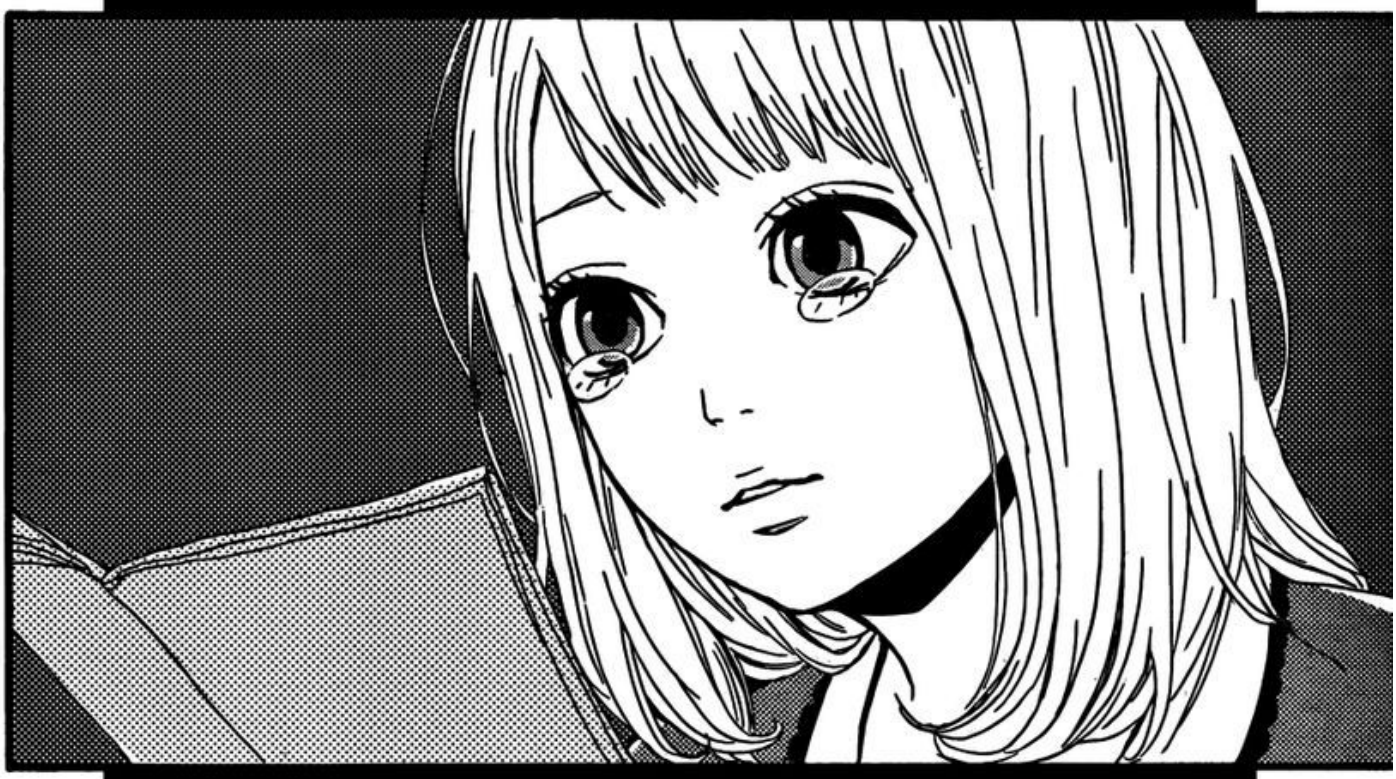

SAVE HIM.

SAVE

KAKERU.

6月超特大号につづく

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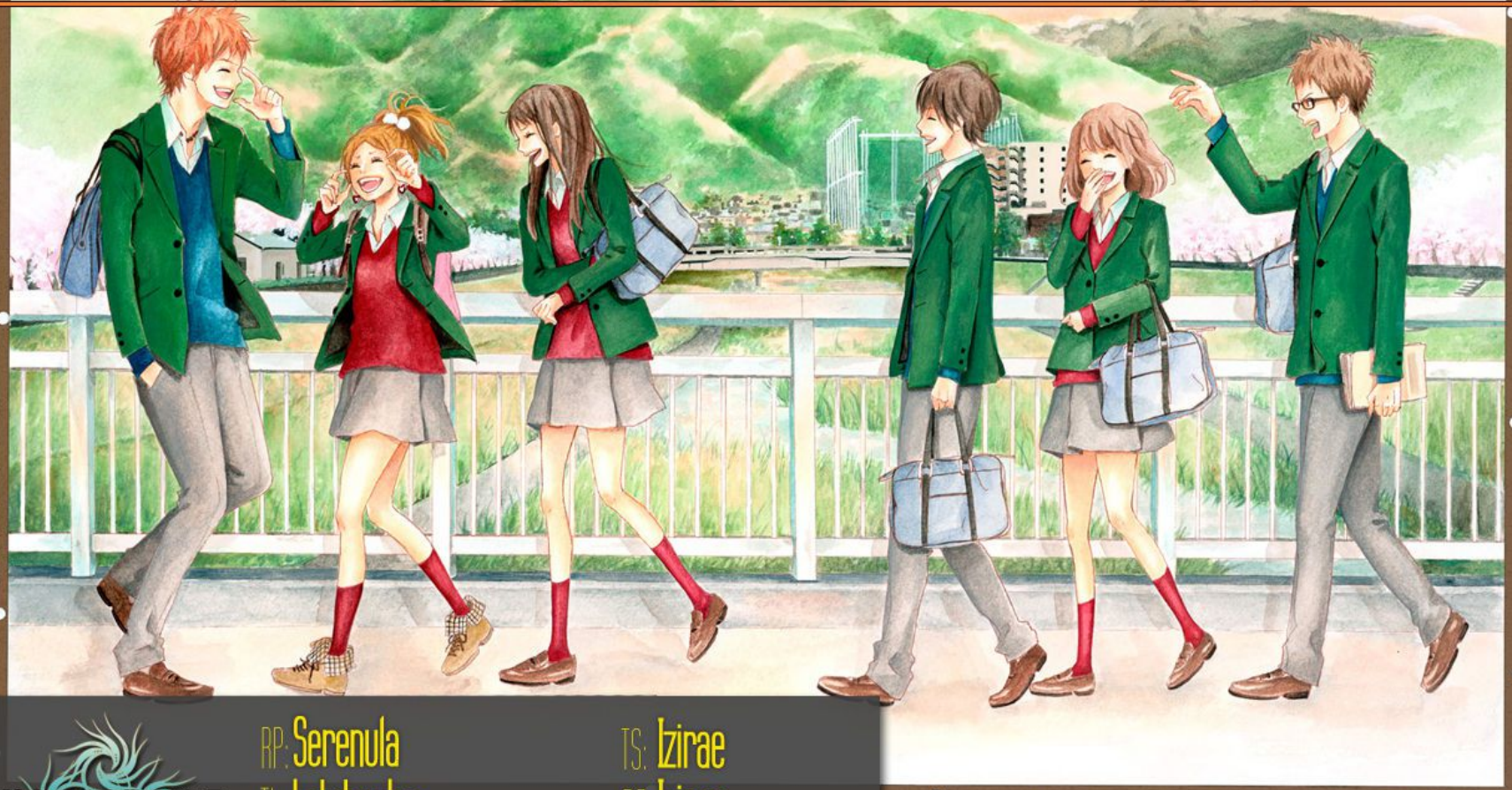
Please purchase her other series and Orange when it becomes available!



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TL: Lebdawho
CL: Izirae
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[オレンジ]

CHAPTER 2: Letter 2

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People buy taiyaki* on Nawate Street,* then rest on the bridge.♪

Swaying Future and Bright Young

A HUGE RESPONSE!!!

The days you were there and my future.

orange

【オレンジ】

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

LETTER 3

*T/N: Nawate Street is the shopping district in Matsumoto.
Taiyaki is a Japanese, fish-shaped pastry [illegible]

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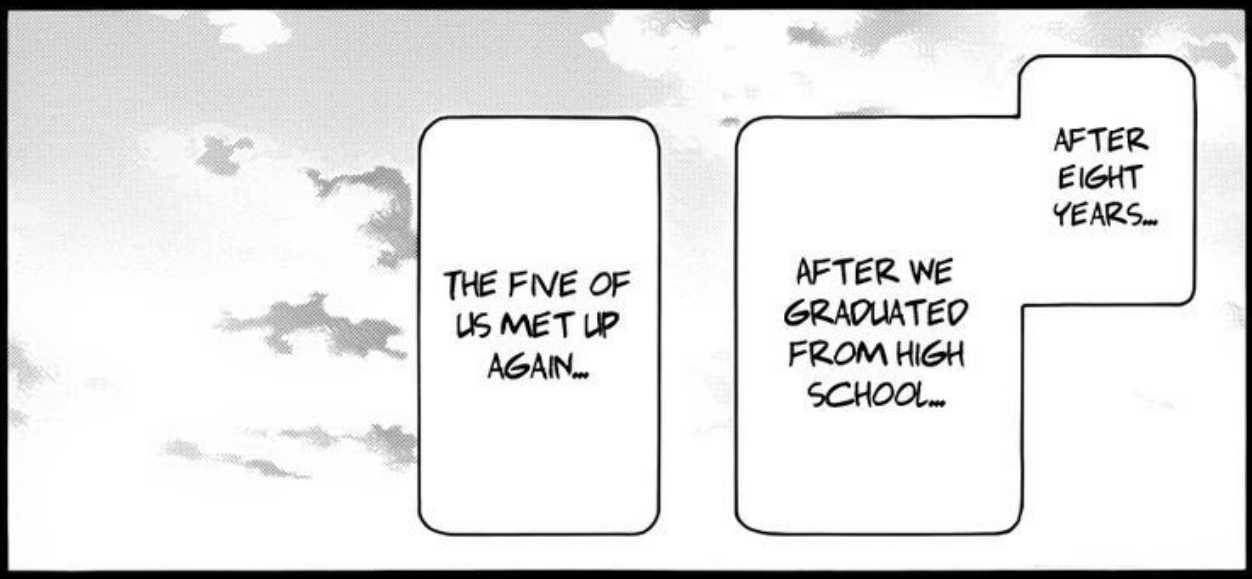

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THE SIX OF US BURIED THESE TIME CAPSULES OUR JUNIOR YEAR.

AH, IT'S HERE!

ARE STILL HERE!

OUR TIME CAPSULES

HERE'S YOURS, TAKAKO.

THANKS!

NEXT IS AZU!

KAKERU WAS THERE TOO.

WE WROTE LETTERS TO OURSELVES TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE AND BURIED THEM IN A CORNER AT SCHOOL.

Crinkle

To Ms. Takamiya Naho,

To the 26 year old me, how are you? What have you done?

My dream is that by 25, I'm married to a wonderful guy, I have a kid, and I work at a day care center.

How did I do?

To 26 Year Old Takamiya Naho

From 16 Year Old Takamiya Naho

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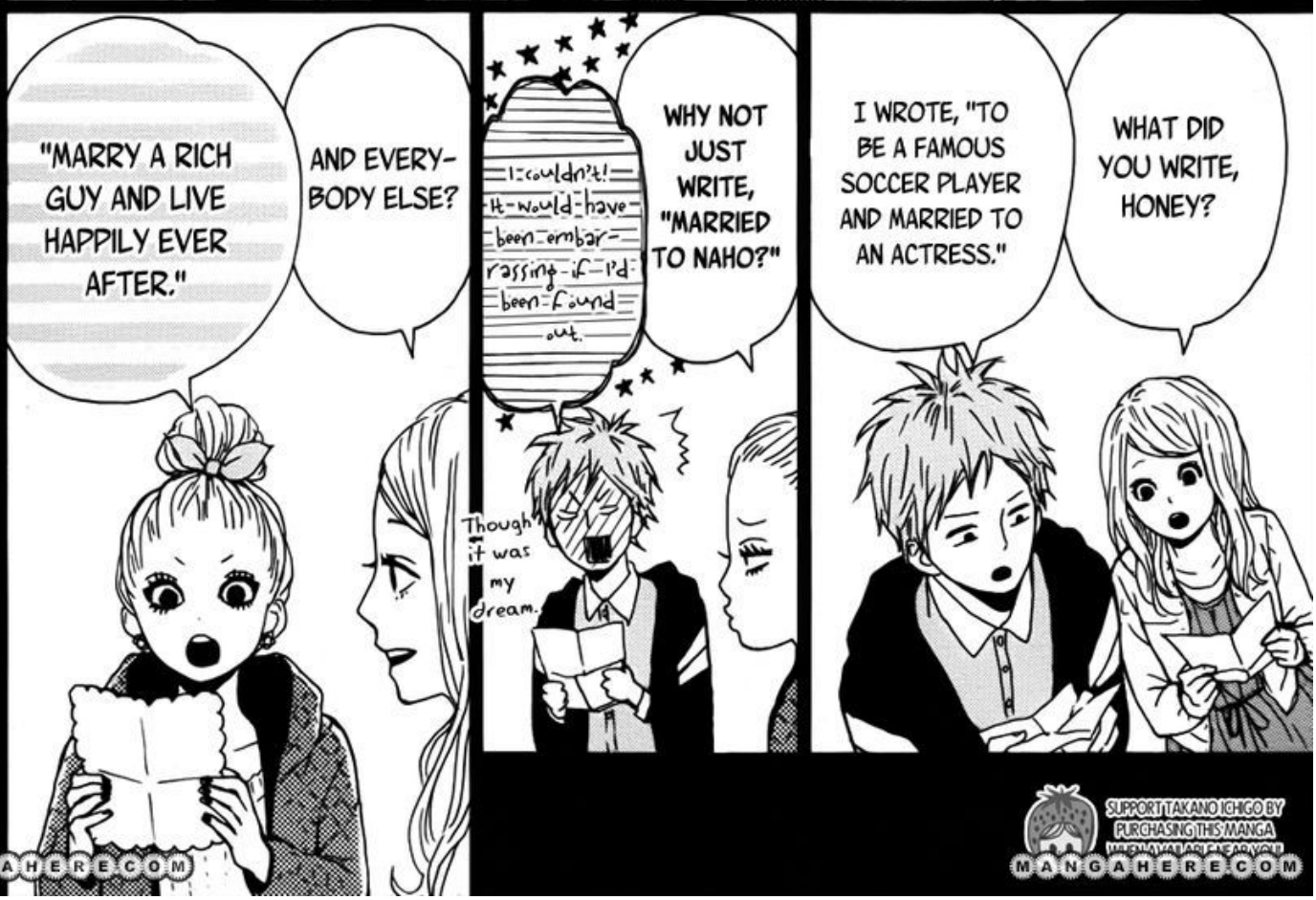

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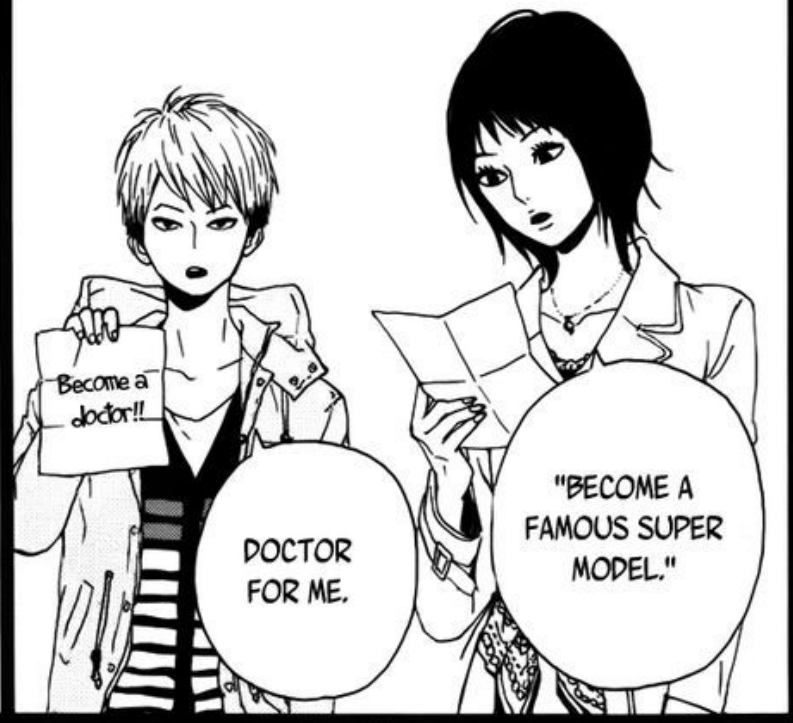

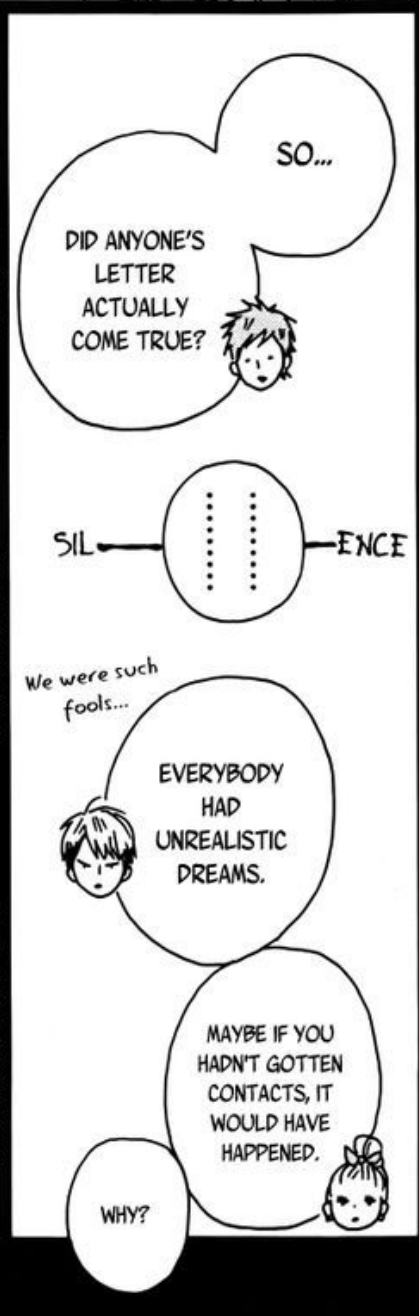

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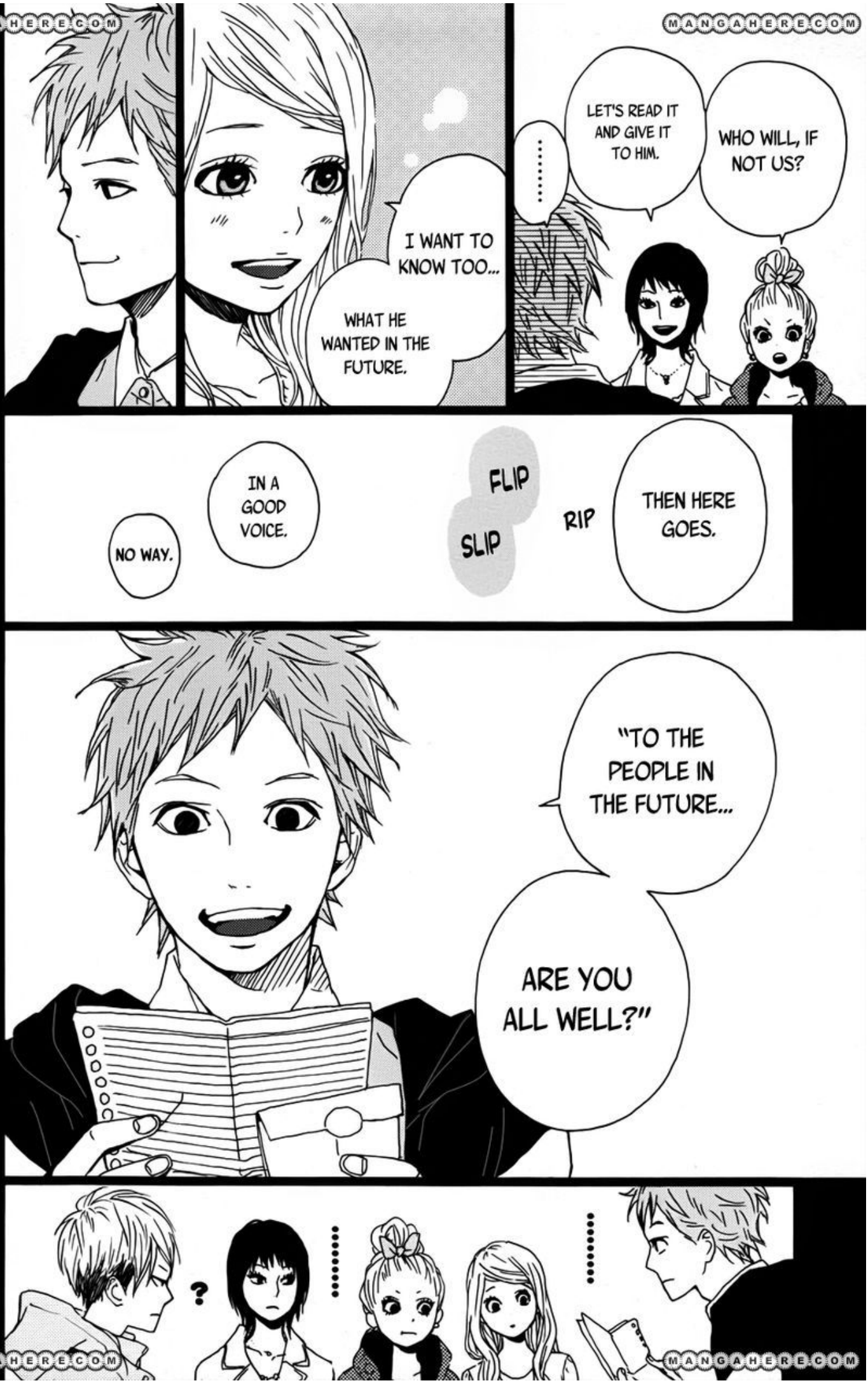

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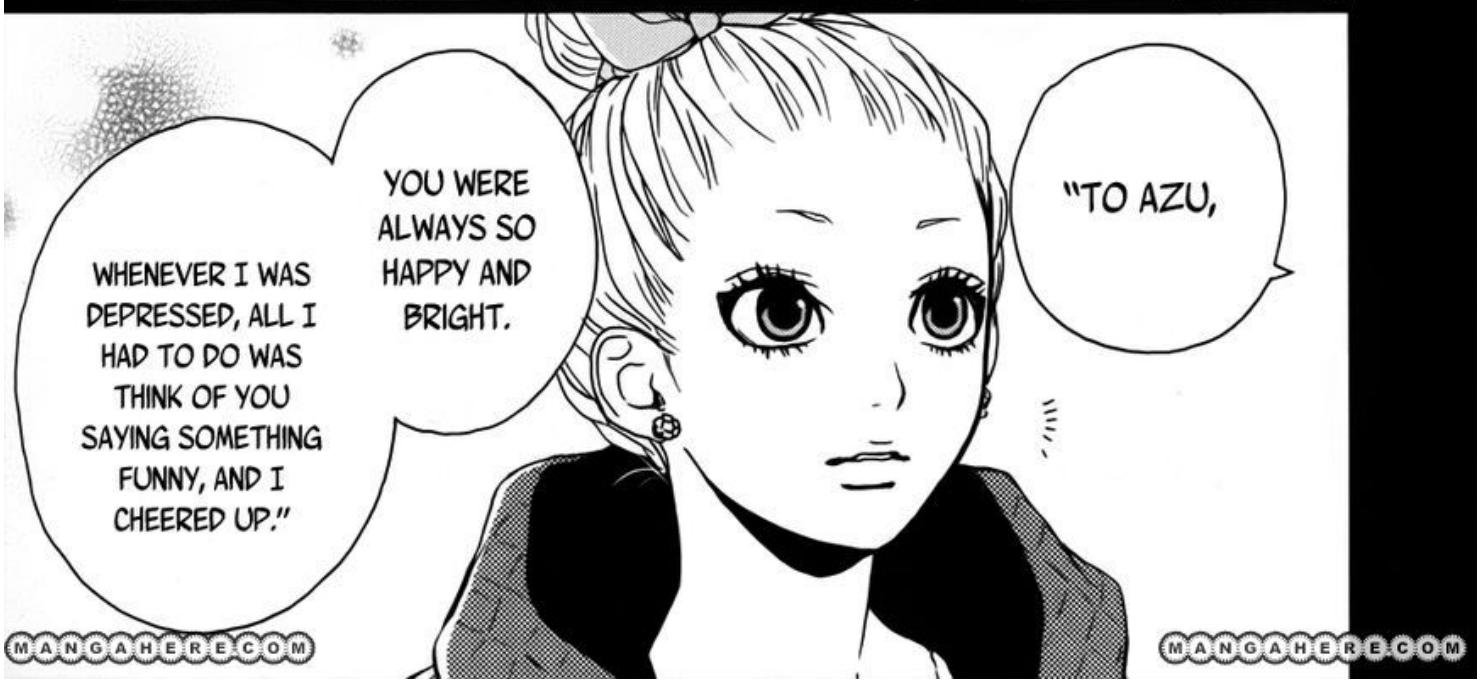

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"TO HAGITA,

YOU ALWAYS LOOKED SO SERIOUS, BUT YOU REALLY DID LIKE TO LAUGH.

"AND YOUR PARENTS' CURRY BREAD WAS DELICIOUS."

BUT IT ALWAYS MADE ME LAUGH."

"I DIDN'T REALLY GET IT,

HE DIDN'T GET IT?

'CAUSE HE ALWAYS ASKED.

WHAT WERE YOU TEACHING HIM?

DURING BREAKS, YOU TOLD ME ALL ABOUT THE 'LAUGHING RULES.' LIKE, 'NOT PUSHING WHAT I SAID, BUT STILL PUSHING.'"

"TO TAKAKO,

YOU WERE A LITTLE SCARY WHEN YOU GOT ANGRY...

BUT IT WAS ALWAYS FOR AZU AND NAHO.

ONE TIME, YOU GOT EXTREMELY ANGRY FOR NAHO, WHICH I THOUGHT WAS PRETTY COOL."

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"TO NAHO,

YOU WERE SO MODEST AND ALWAYS THOUGHT OF OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF.

WHEN EVERYBODY WAS HAPPY, YOU LOOKED HAPPIEST.

THE COOKIES THAT YOU, AZU, AND TAKAKO MADE IN HOME ECO...

YOURS WERE THE BEST.

I ALWAYS WAITED TO EAT YOUR HOME COOKING, DAY AFTER DAY."

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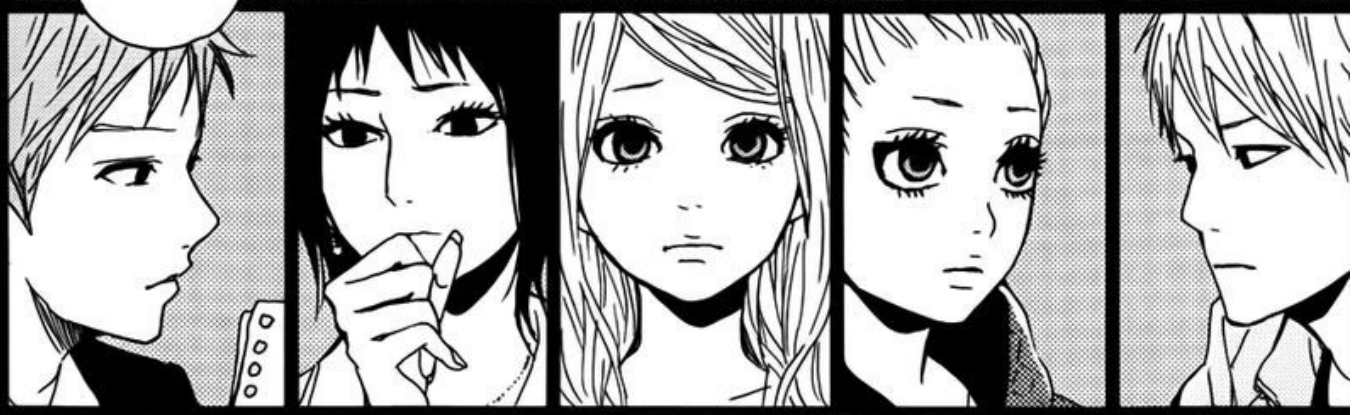
"I KNOW THAT THE FUTURE YOU...

WILL STILL BE CLOSE AND LAUGHING TO-GETHER WITH EVERYONE."

"NARUSE KAKERU"



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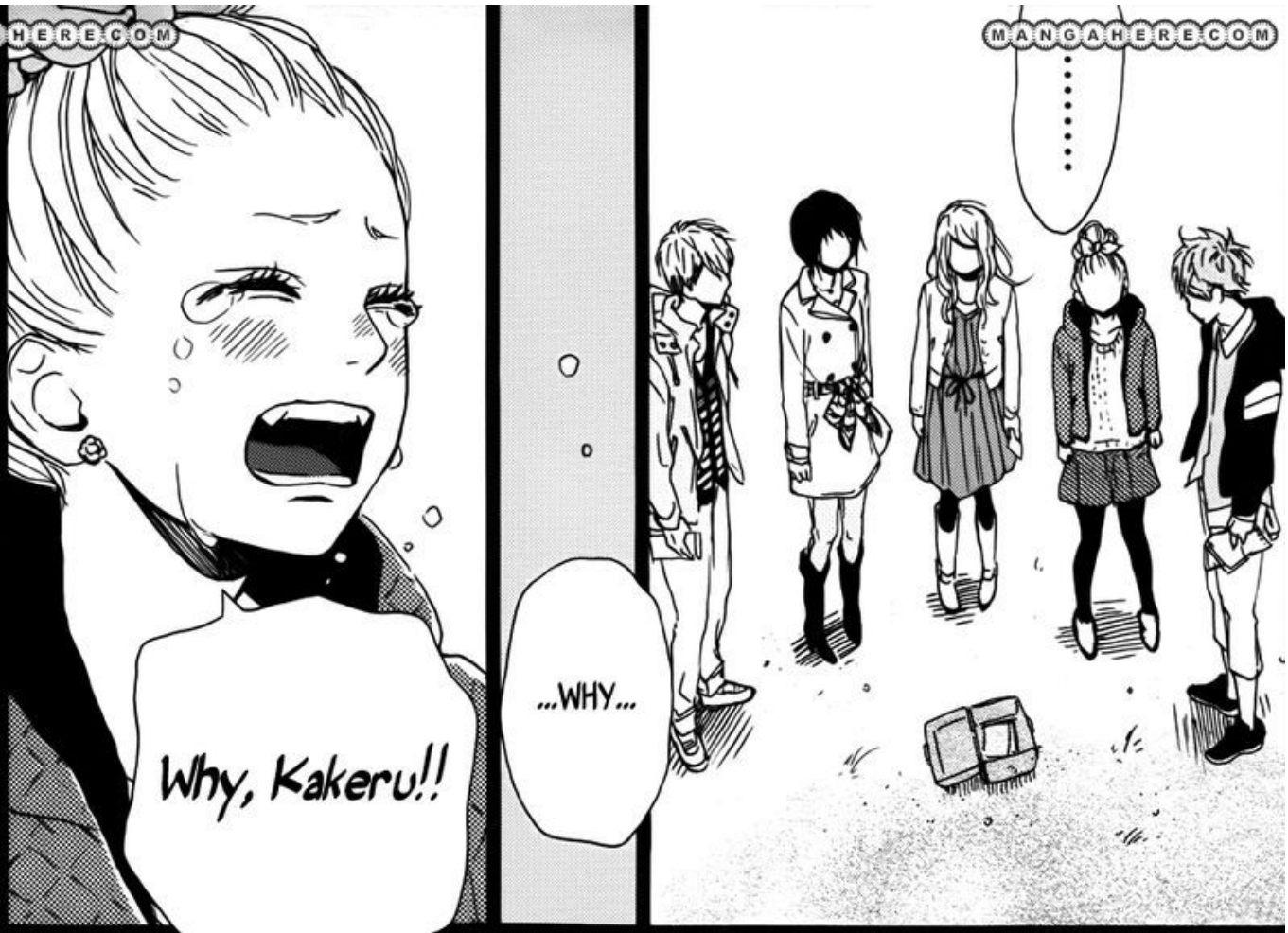

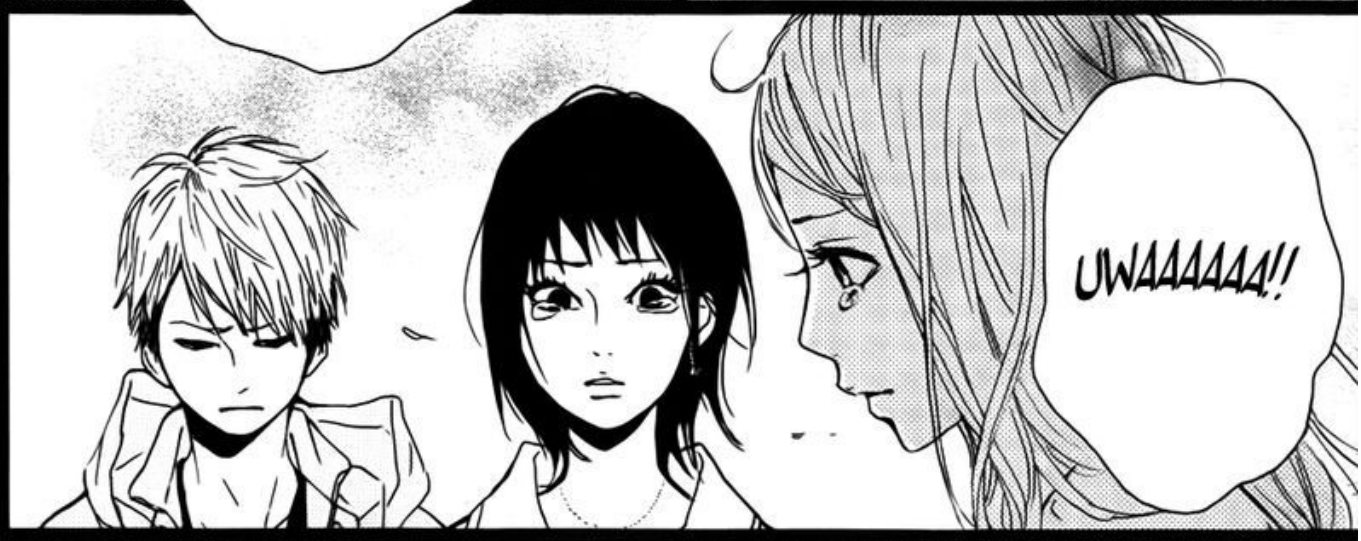

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KAKERU WILL BE SAVED...

IF YOU WATCH HIM CLOSELY...

AND DON'T LET HIM BE BY HIMSELF.

HE PROBABLY WON'T HAVE TO GO TO HEAVEN.

SO HIS WISHES FOR THE FUTURE AND OURS WERE DIFFERENT.

WE AREN'T CLOSE ANYMORE, AND WE DON'T SMILE TOGETHER ANYMORE.

IF KAKERU HADN'T DIED...

AZU WOULDN'T FIGHT SO MUCH WITH SUWA...

OR WITH YOU.

THAT'S... HOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.

LET'S GO...

SEE KAKERU.

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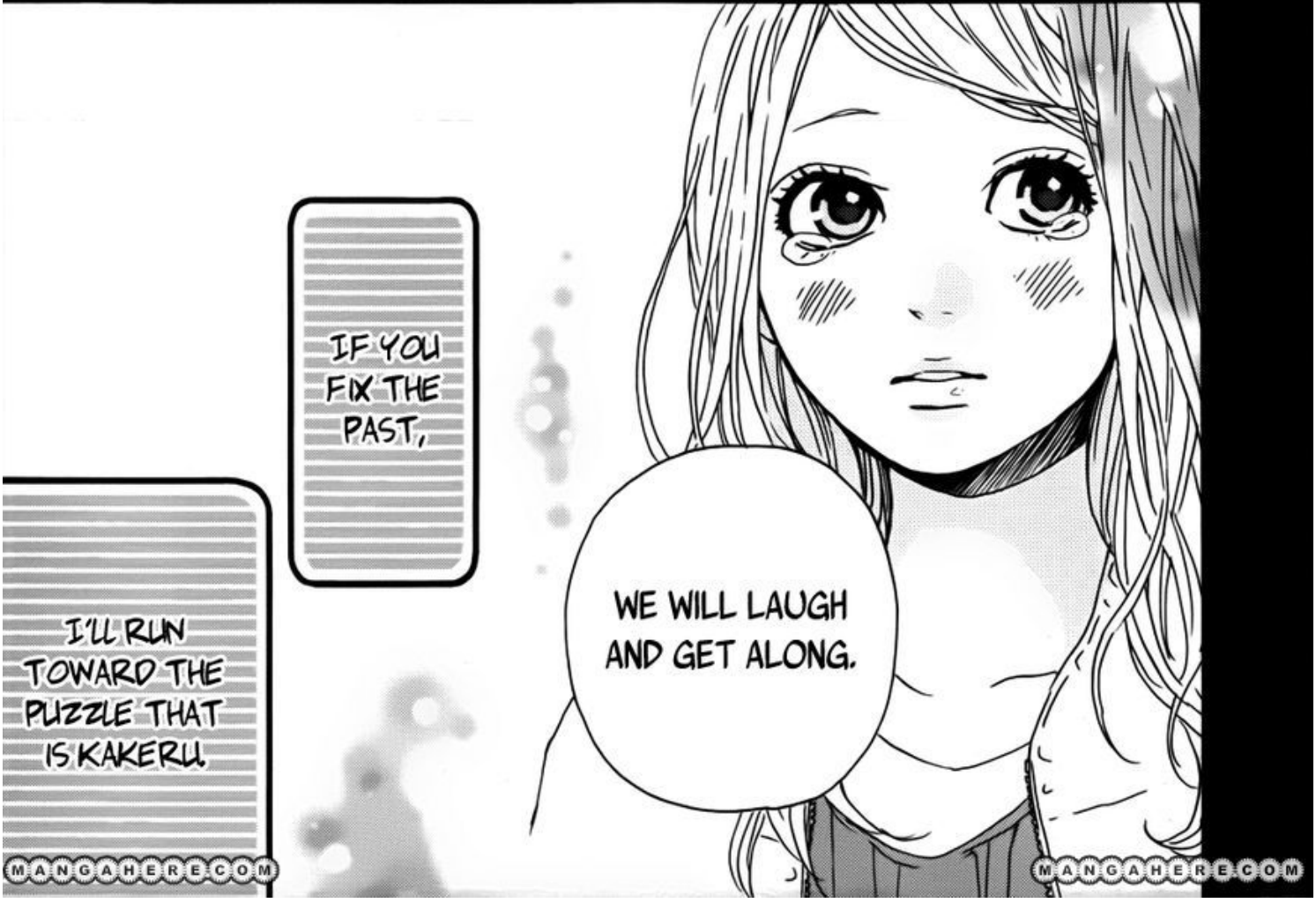

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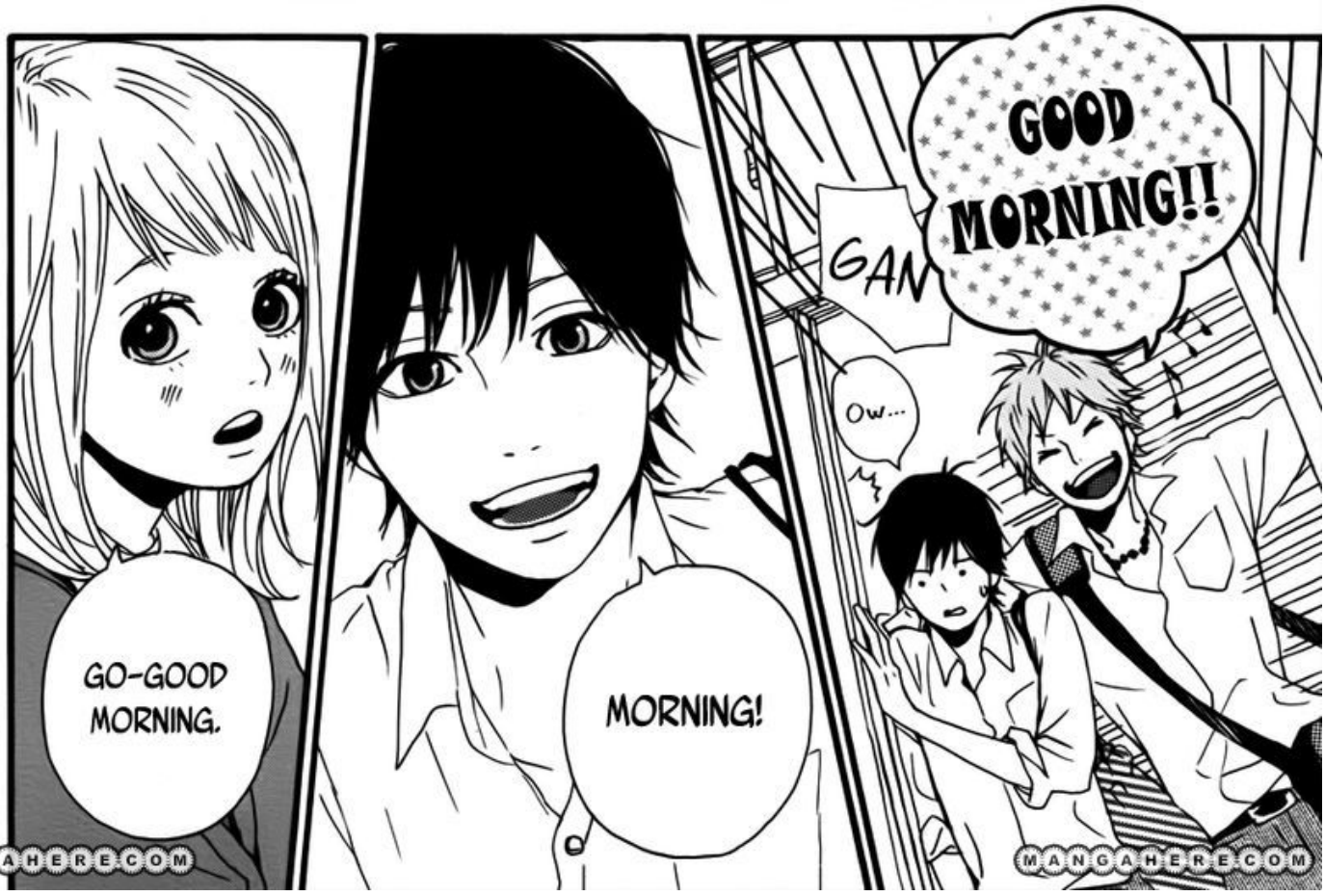
THIS TIME I WILL SAVE KAKERU.

『May 1st』

『 May 1st 』

- After playing for a week, Kakeru quits the soccer club.
- Make sure he rejoins the club.

◎Even if he's unreasonable, I want him to join. I'm pretty sure that he himself actually wants to join.



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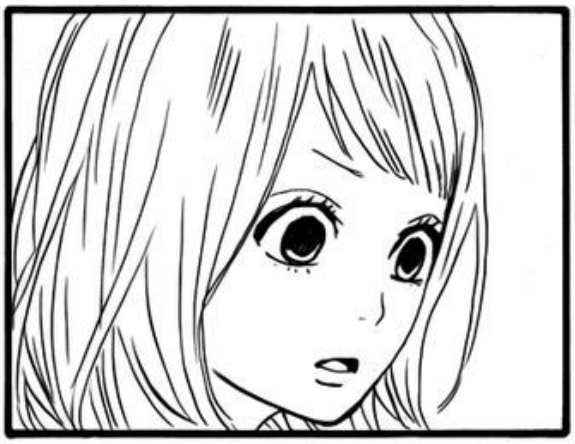
LISTEN!!
NOT NOW...
EVERYBODY!! LISTEN!!
HE'LL JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB!!
I'LL CHANGE THE FUTURE!!



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...Huh?

Could...

YEAH, YEAH. I KNOW I'M NOT POPULAR.

ANNOYING GUYS ARE AWFUL.

I KNOW...

SUWA WAS SO ANNOYING, KEPT ON ASKING ME TO JOIN!

THE FUTURE HAVE CHANGED ALREADY?

I'M SURE THAT ME MAKING HIM LUNCHES...

AND THE FUTURE ME SENDING ME THIS LETTER...

I'LL HAVE MORNING PRACTICE STARTING TOMORROW,

SO I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO WAKE ME UP.

...OKAY!

ALL THE THINGS IN THE LETTER HAVE ACTUALLY HAPPENED...

IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT WOULD BE WRONG...

NAHO-

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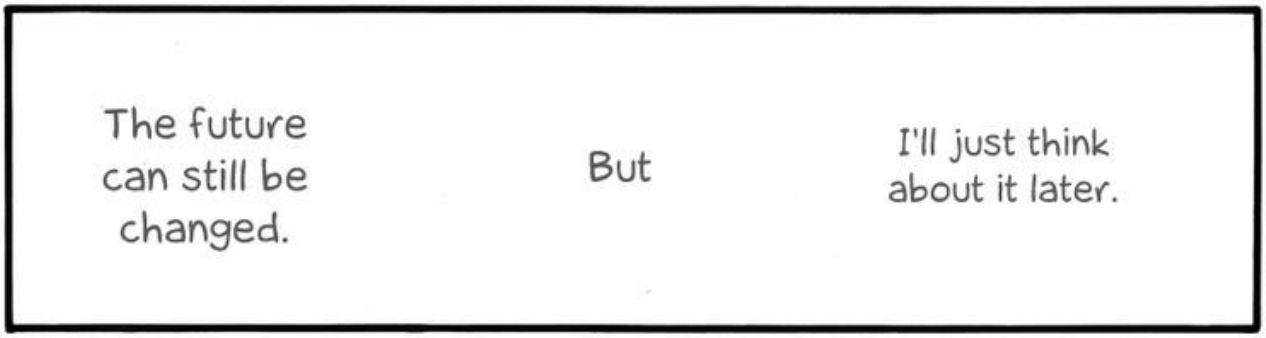

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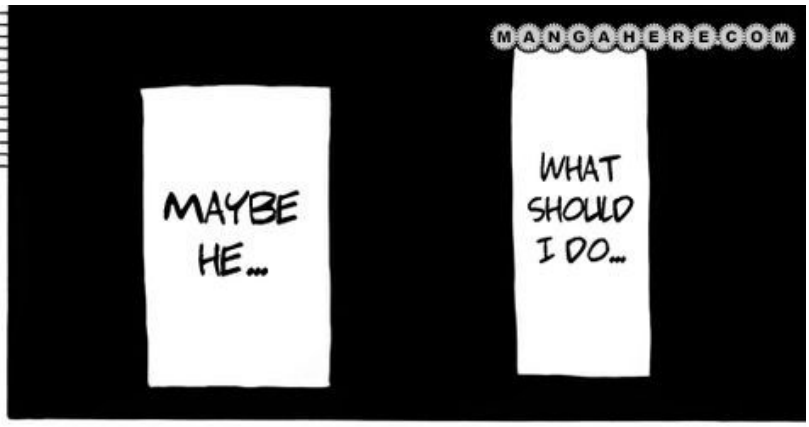
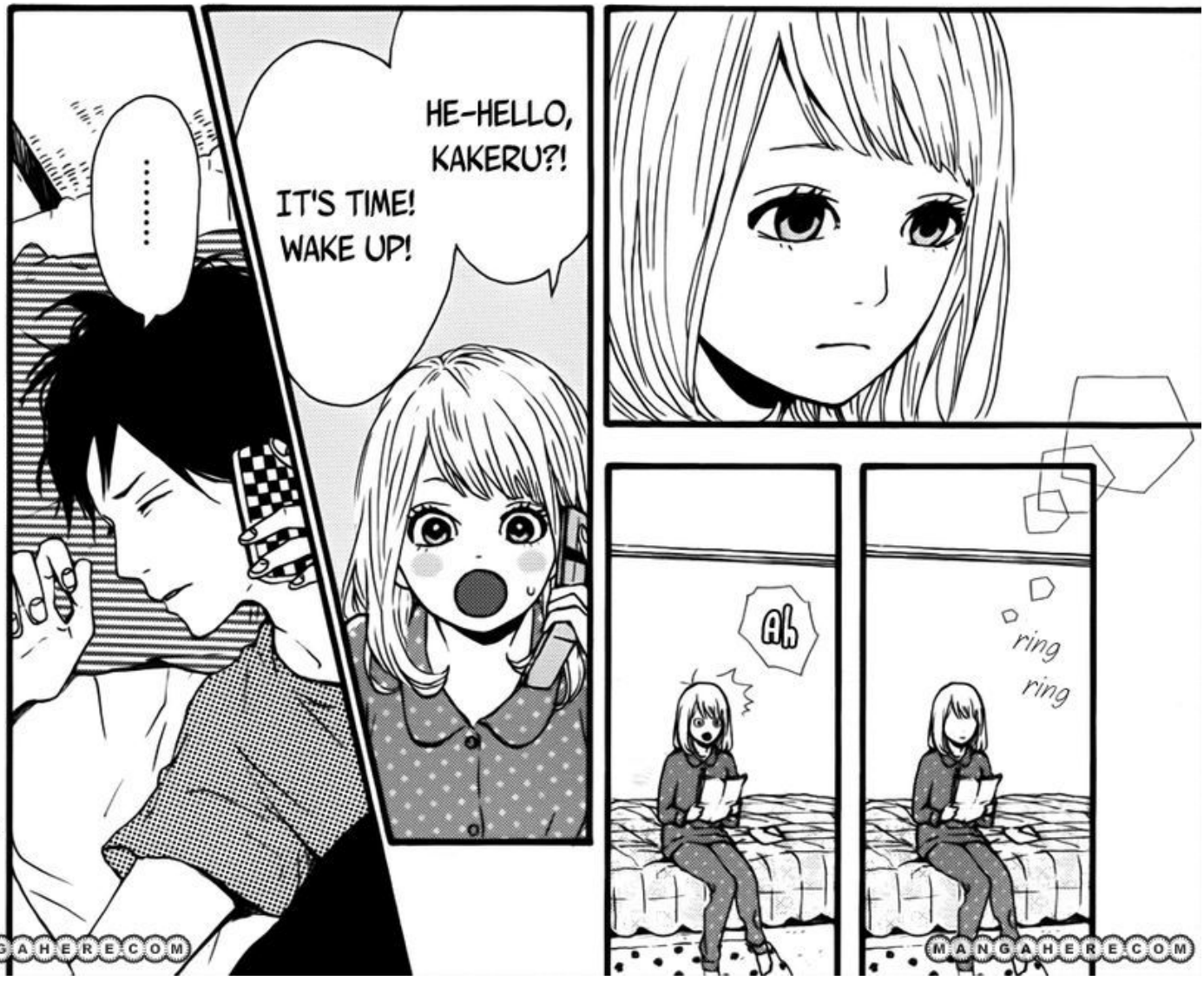


『 May 2nd 』

- Before the holidays, we have a half-day.
- During break time, Ueda confesses to Kakeru.
- They start going out after that.



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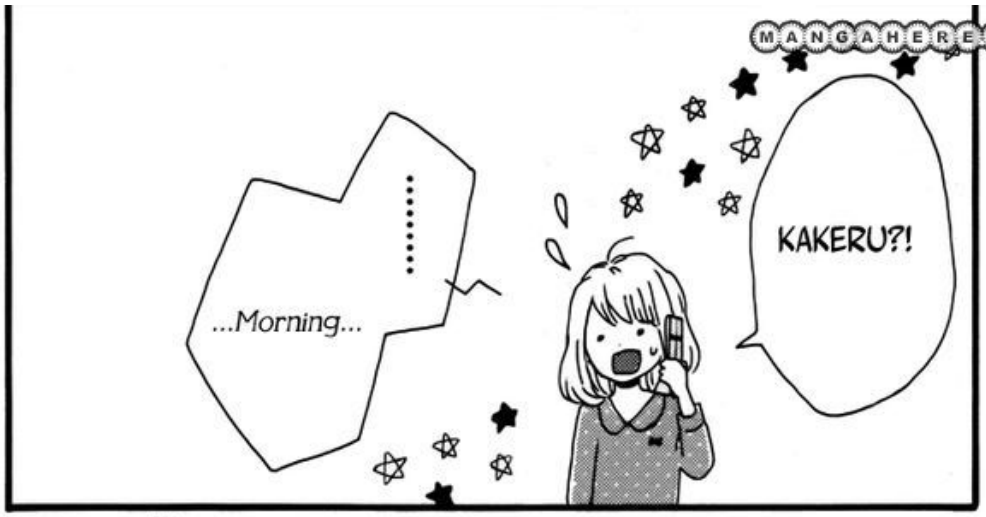

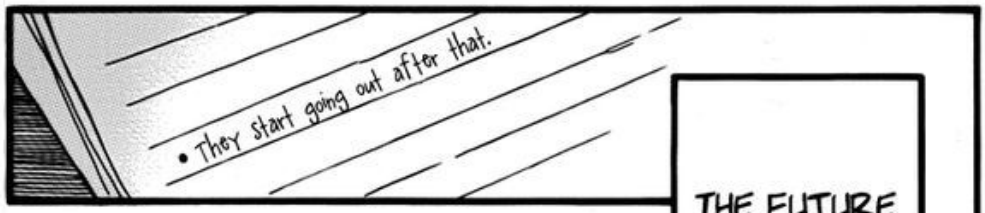

THE FUTURE CAN BE CHANGED.

THAT SHOULD BE EASY.

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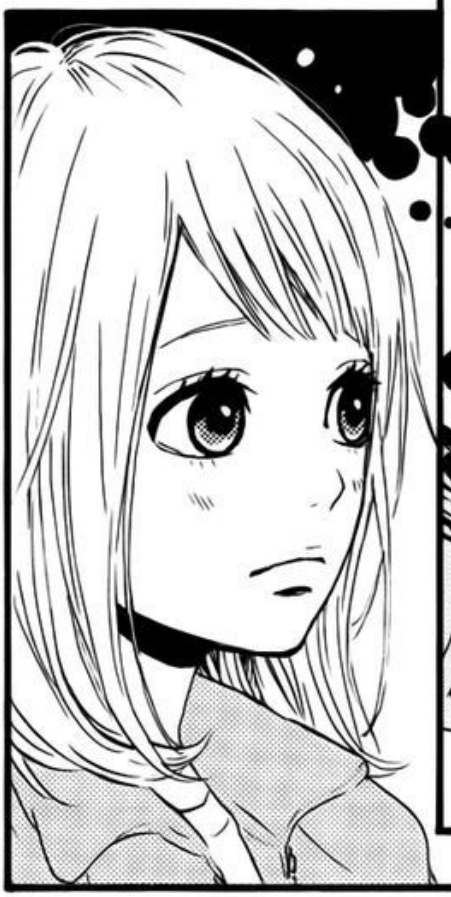

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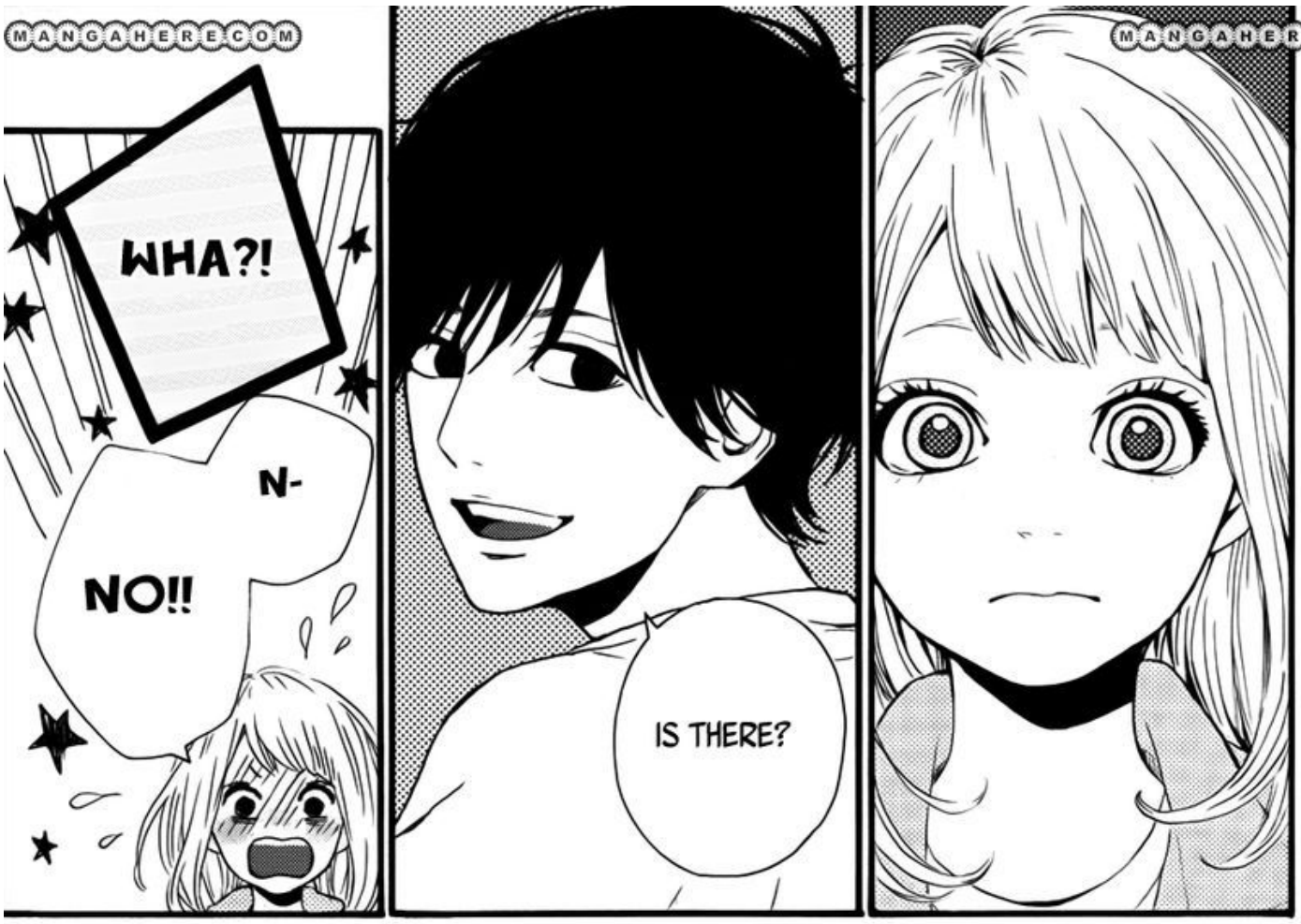

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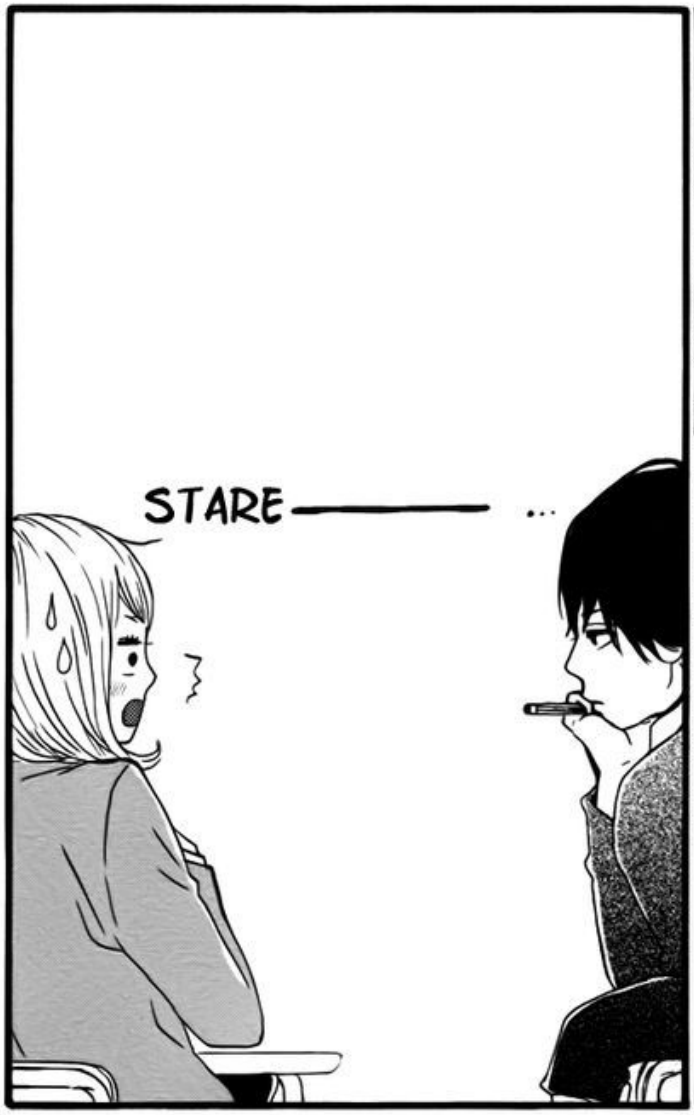

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JUST "ANYTHING" IS NOT OKAY.

...ORANGE JUICE...

"IF YOU ONLY PUT UP WITH IT..."

"YOU'LL LOSE".

My feelings...

Can get bigger!

AH, THERE HE IS!

YOU OKAY WITH CARRYING ALL THAT?!

I'M LEAVING, THEN.

THANKS!

GOT IT!

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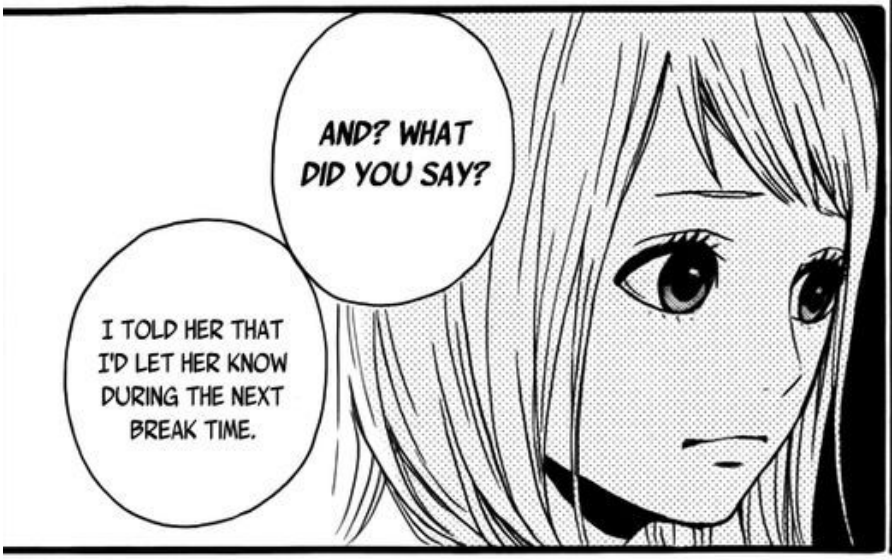

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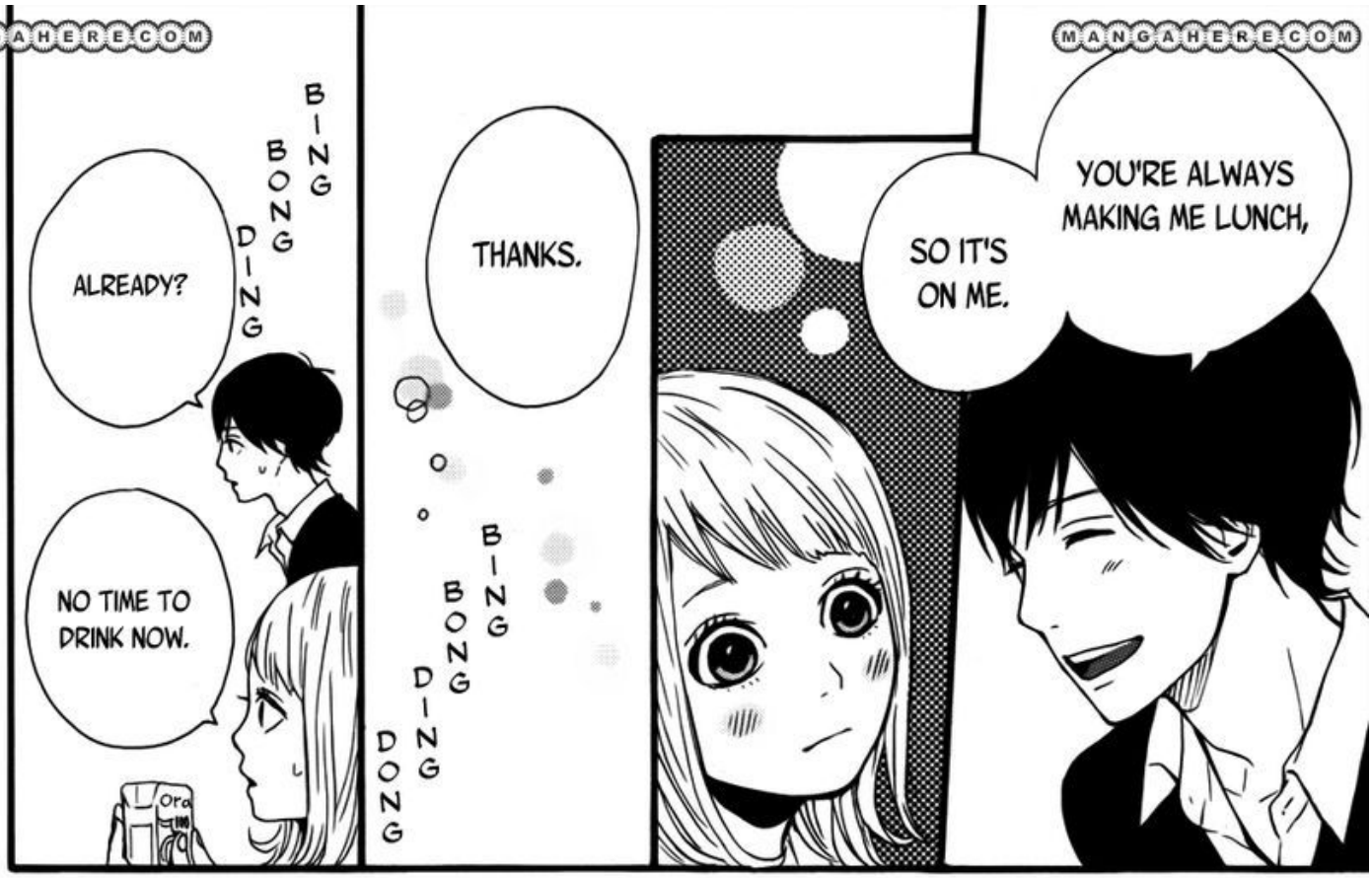
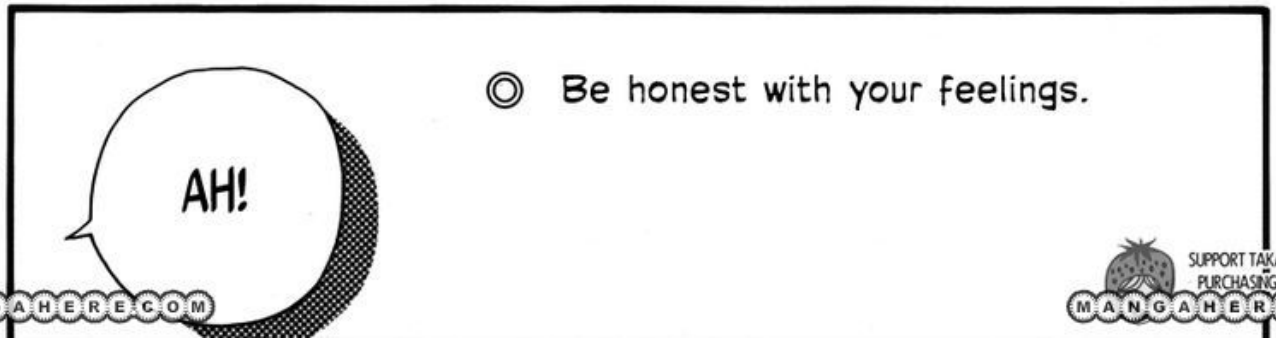


- 4th period--
  I lent Kakeru a pencil and eraser, since he forgot his pen case.

◎ After Class--
When Kakeru gives them back, look in the eraser wrapper.



◎ Be honest with your feelings.

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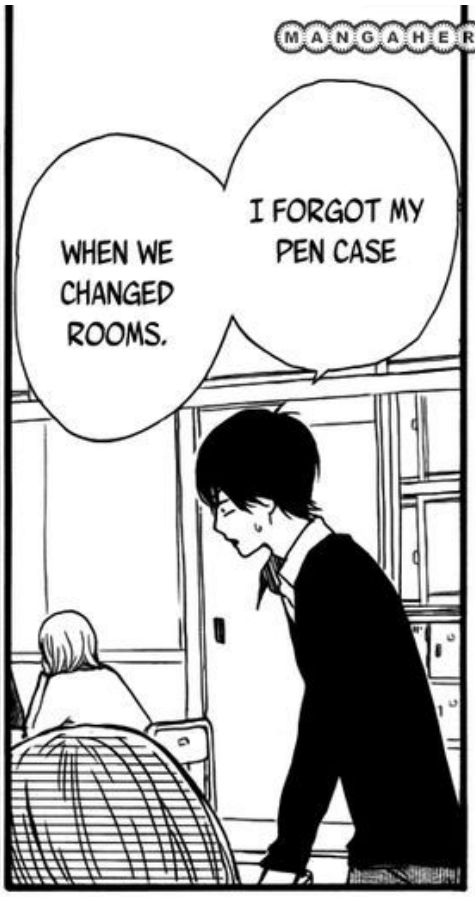

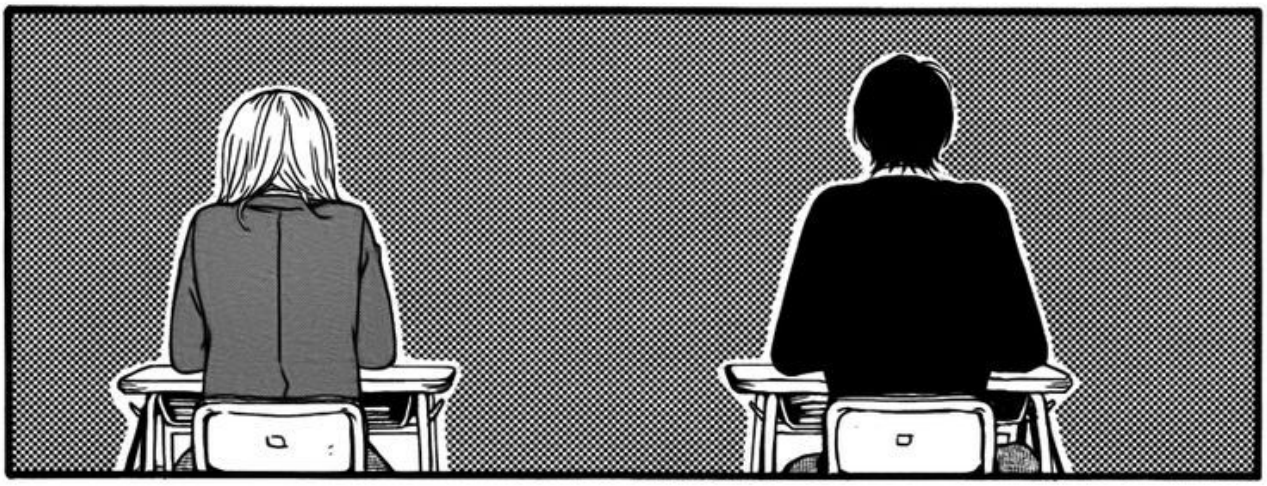

...WHAT SHOULD I DO?

IT'S KIND OF MEAN ...

BUT THE WAY I FEEL...

I DON'T WANT KAKERU TO GO OUT WITH UEDA...

I KNOW THAT...

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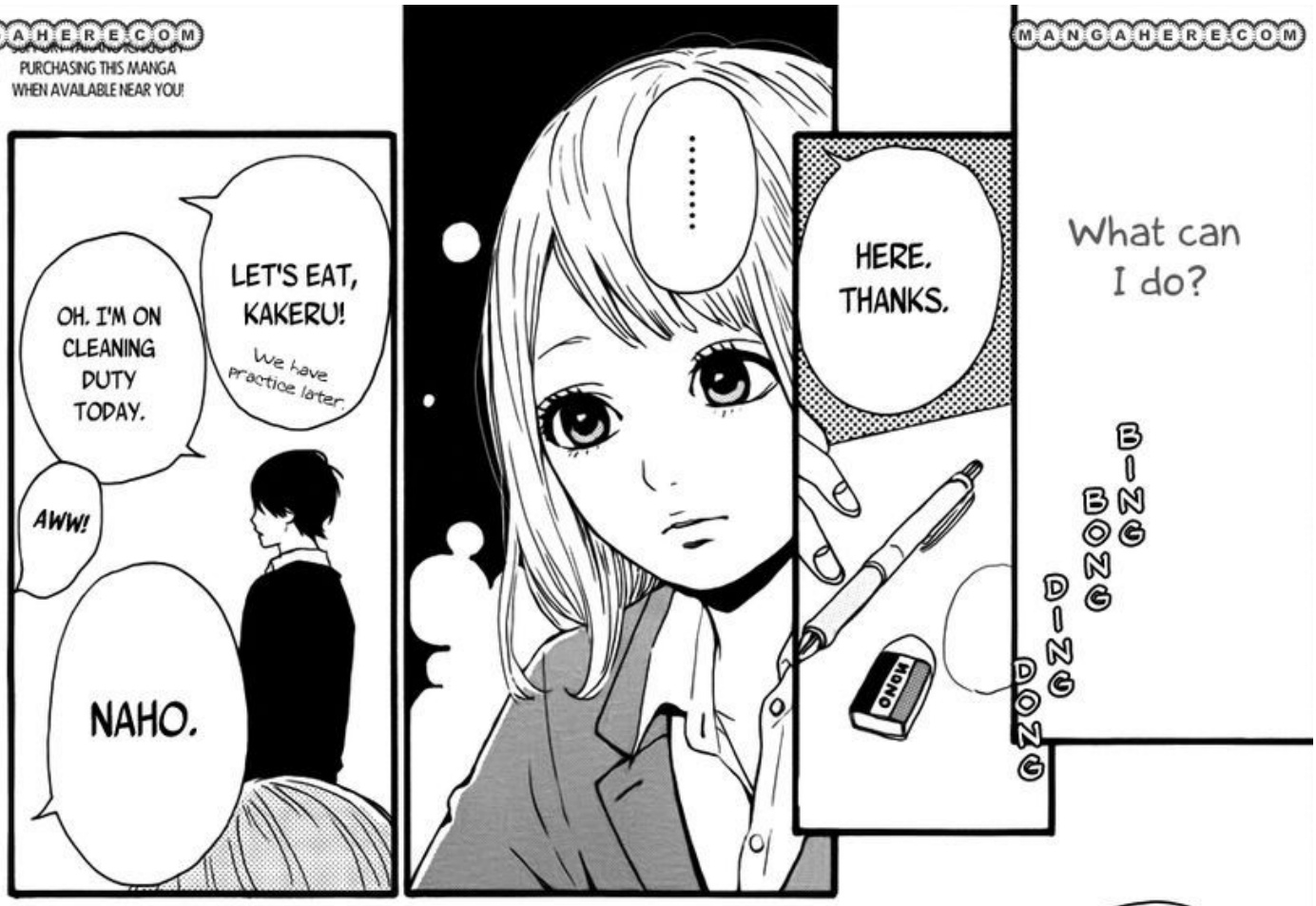

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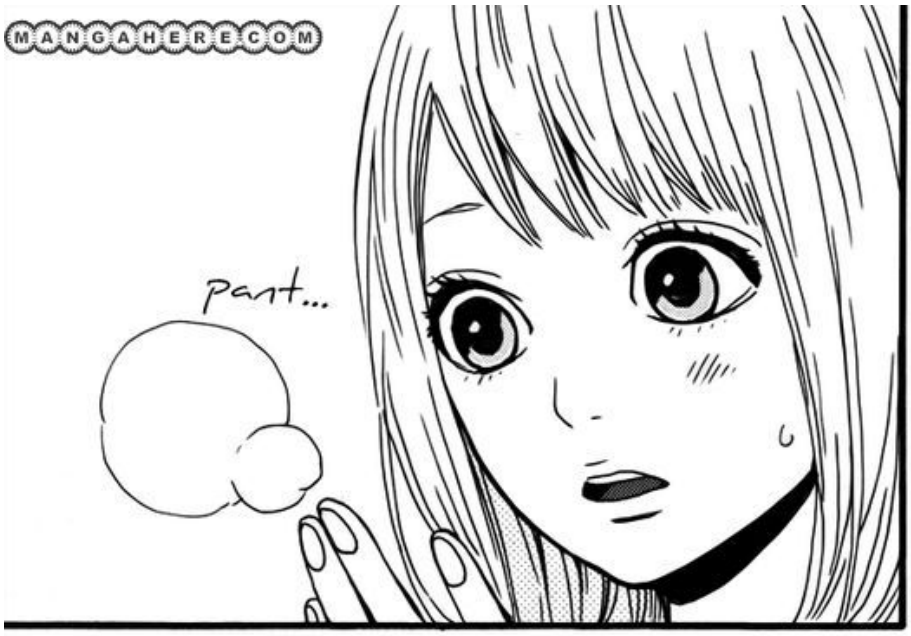
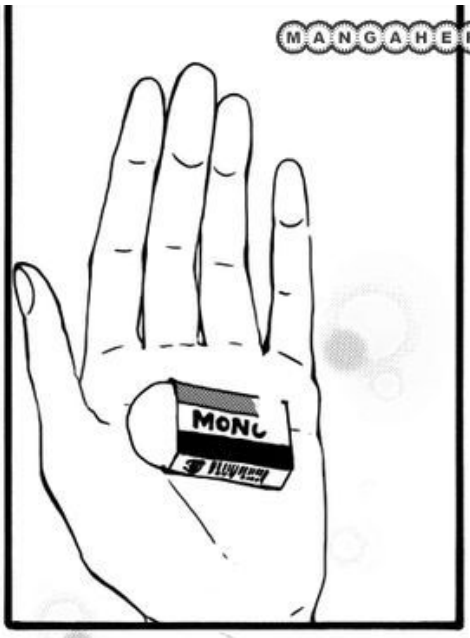
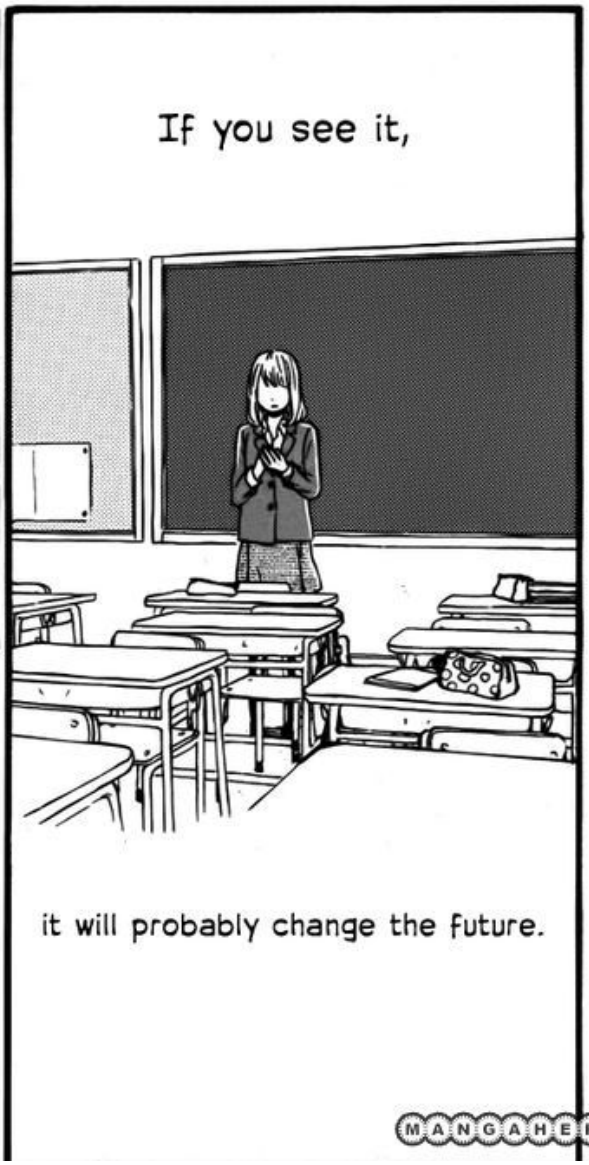




• In the eraser that Kakeru borrowed, there's a message in it.

I didn't notice it that day.



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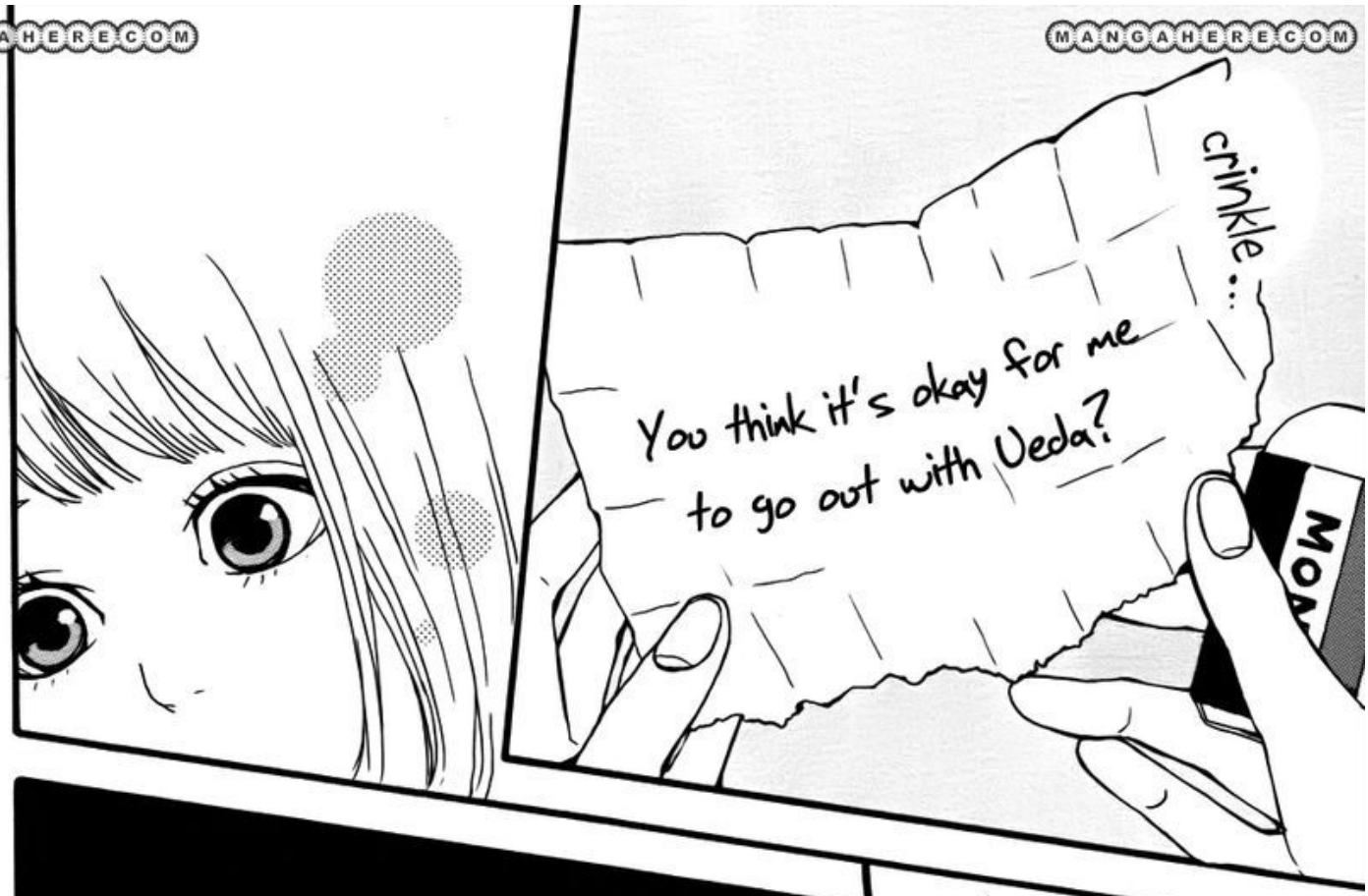

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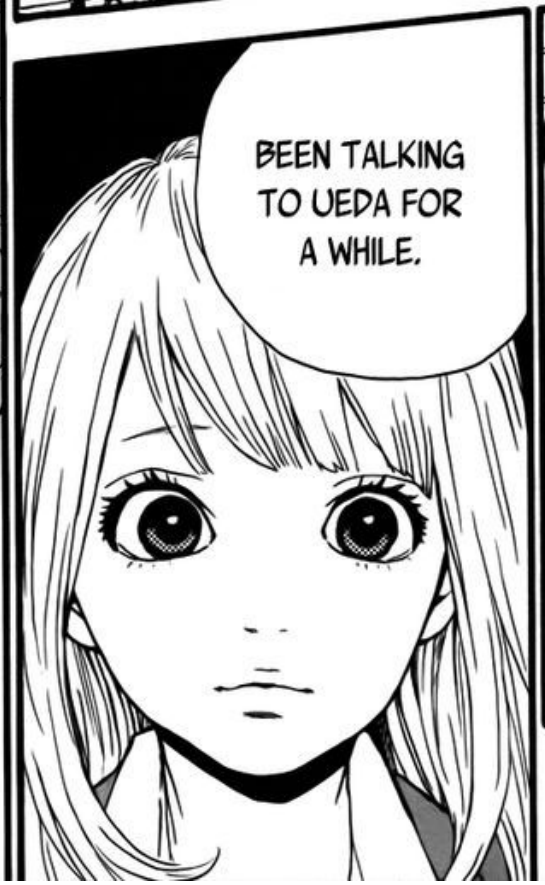

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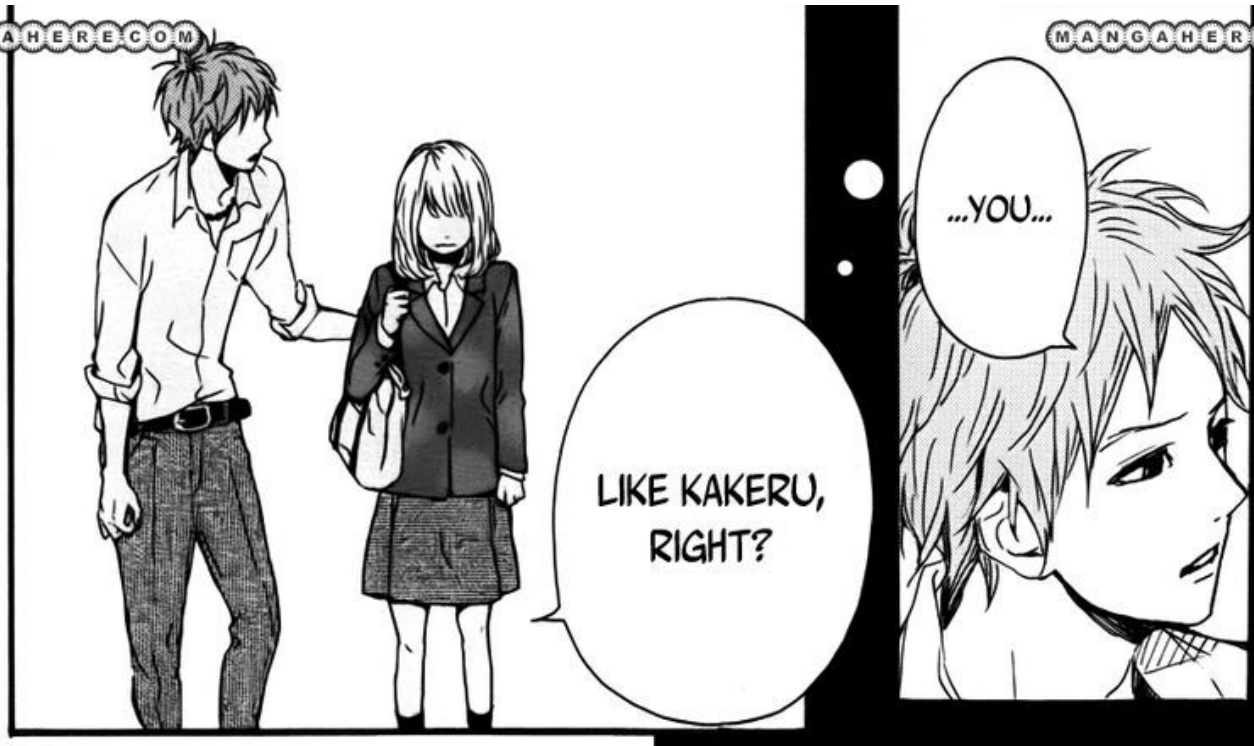

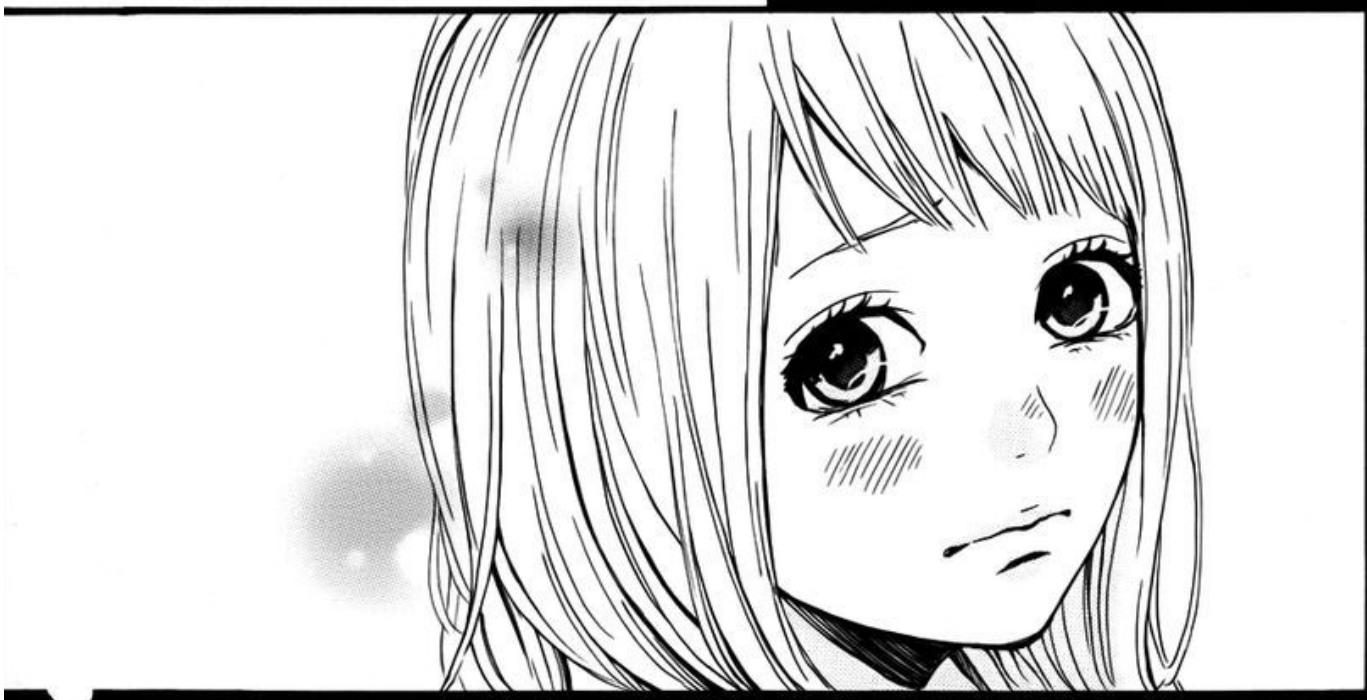

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WEDNES-DAY, MAY 2ND

BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS, DURING 4TH PERIOD BREAK...

AND THEY STARTED GOING OUT.

UEDA CONFESSED TO KAKERU,

I'M NOT HUNGRY.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR DINNER?

WELCOME BACK, NAHO.

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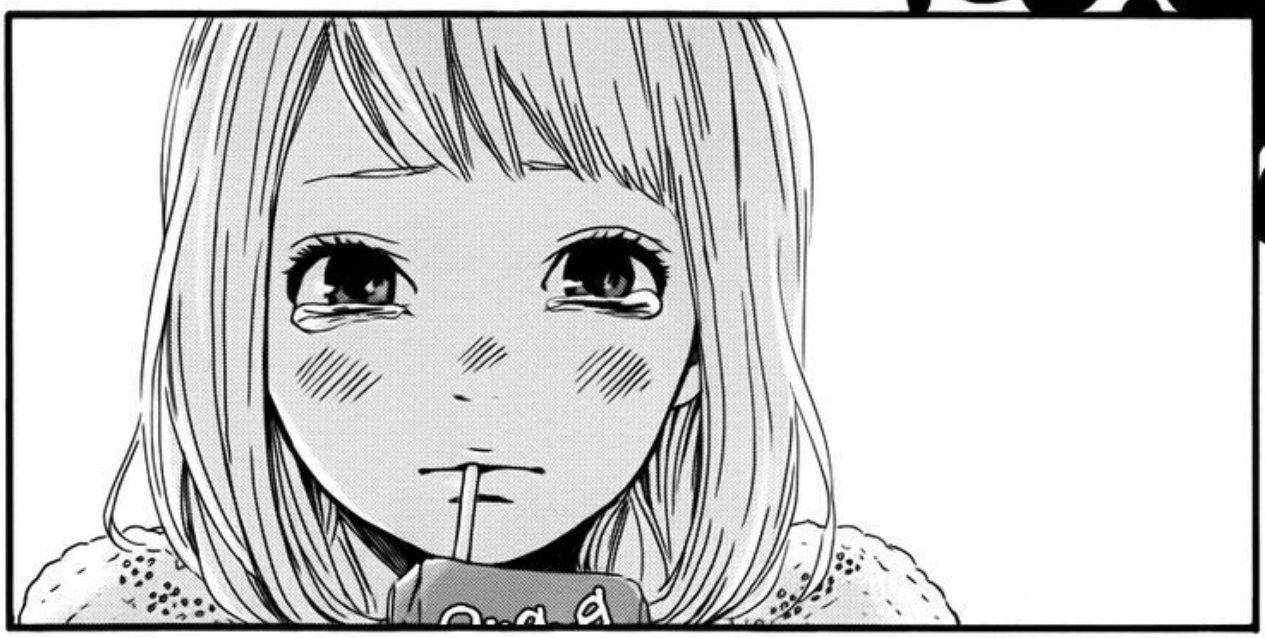
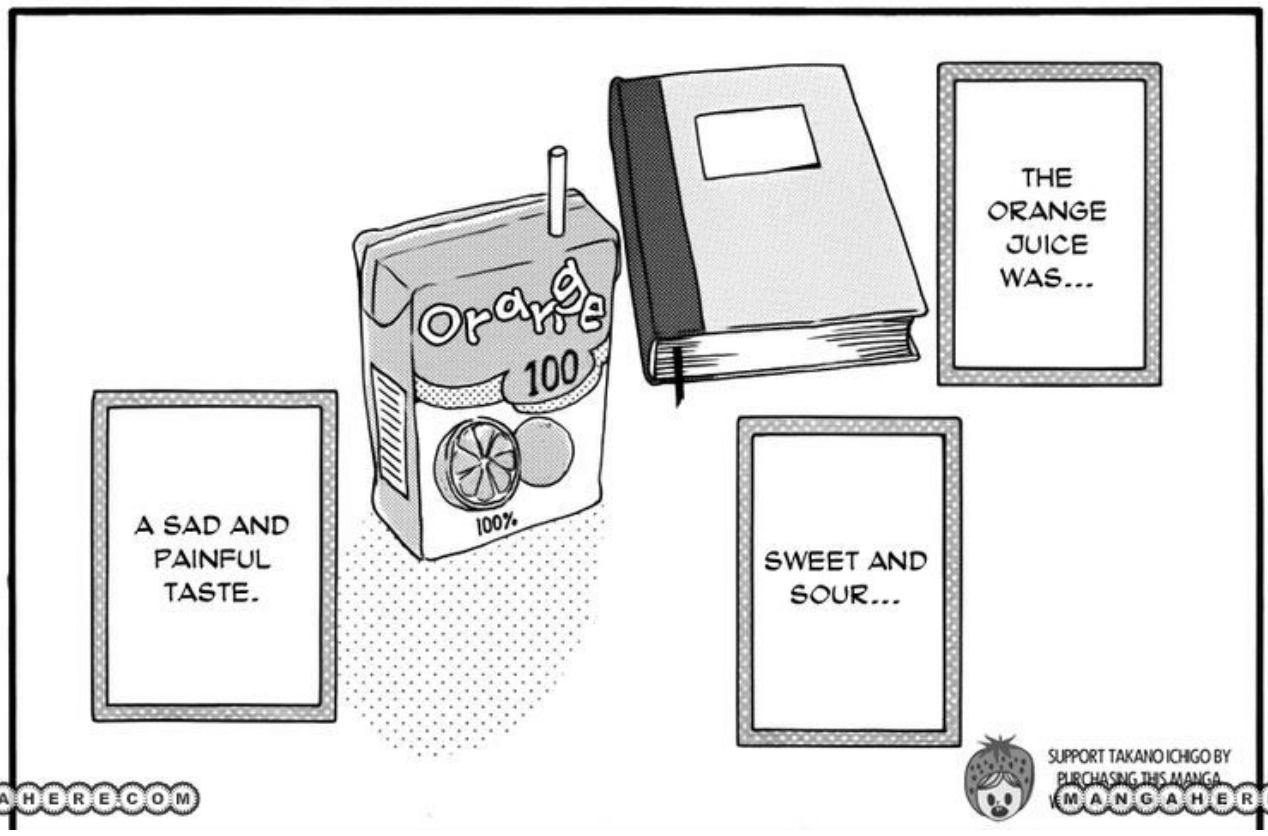
BECAUSE MY CHEST HURT SO MUCH, I COULDN'T EAT DINNER.

I DRANK THE JUICE KAKERU BOUGHT ME IN MY ROOM UNTIL IT WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY.





7月超特大号に つづく

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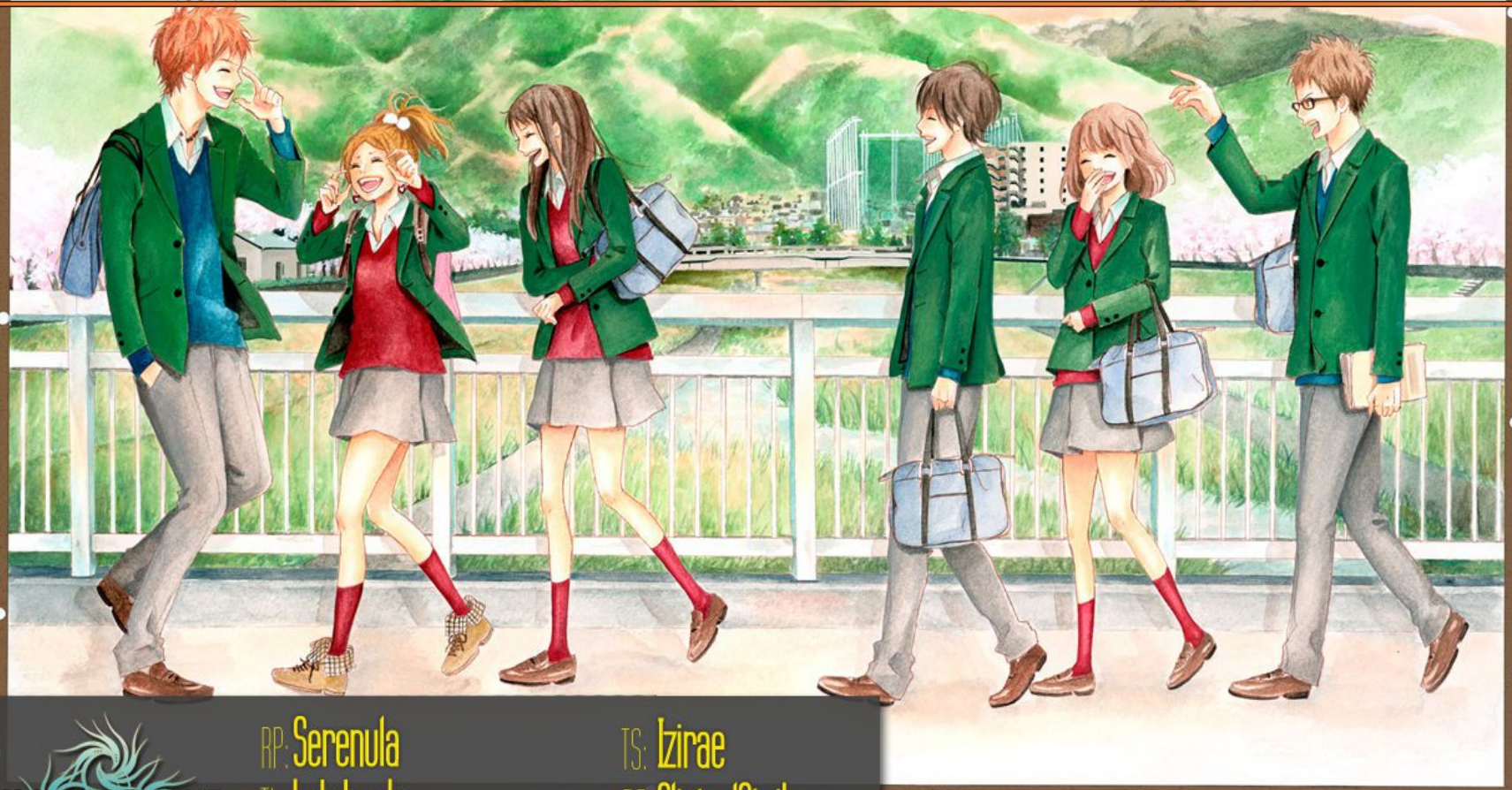
Support Takano Ichigo sensei by visiting her blog site, http://ameblo.jp/chocodeblog!

Please purchase her other series and Orange when it becomes available!



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CHAPTER 3: Letter 3

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The Sparkling Miracle of the present and the future.

Gaining more and more attention!!

The days you were there and my future.

orange

【オレンジ】

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

LETTER 4

Last Saturday.
It was sunny at Parco.

NEWS!!

The first volume will be out on July 25th (Wed)!

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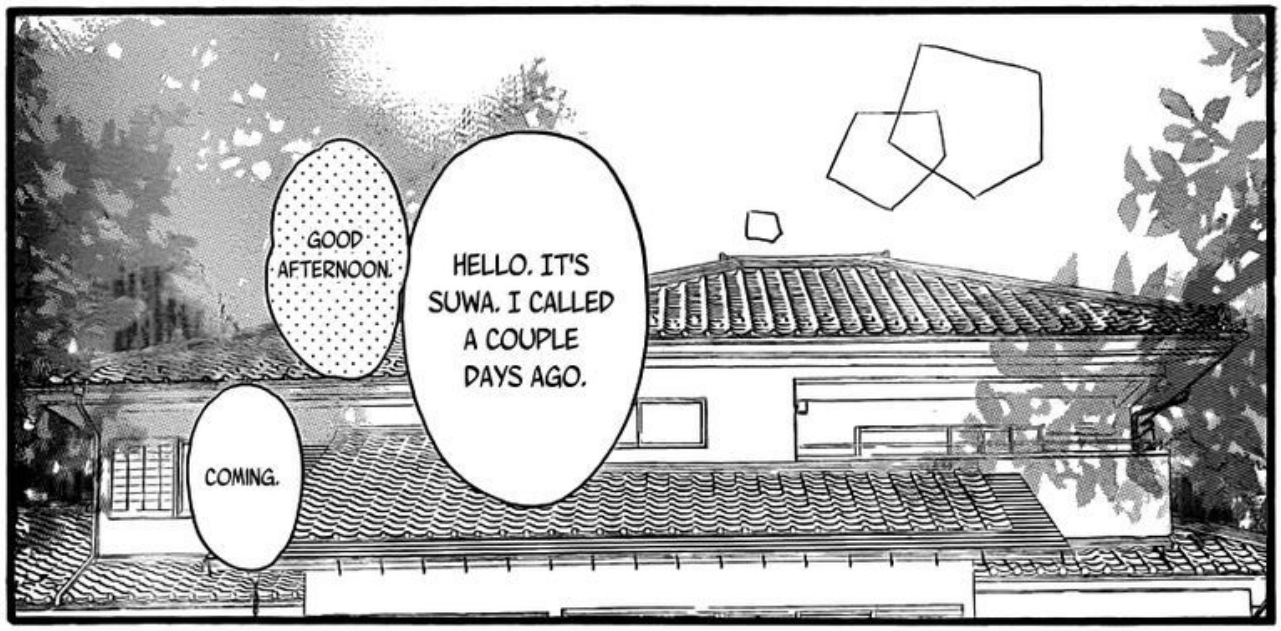
After his mother passed away,

Kakeru lived with his Grandmother on the outskirts of Matsumoto.

We've only been to visit twice.



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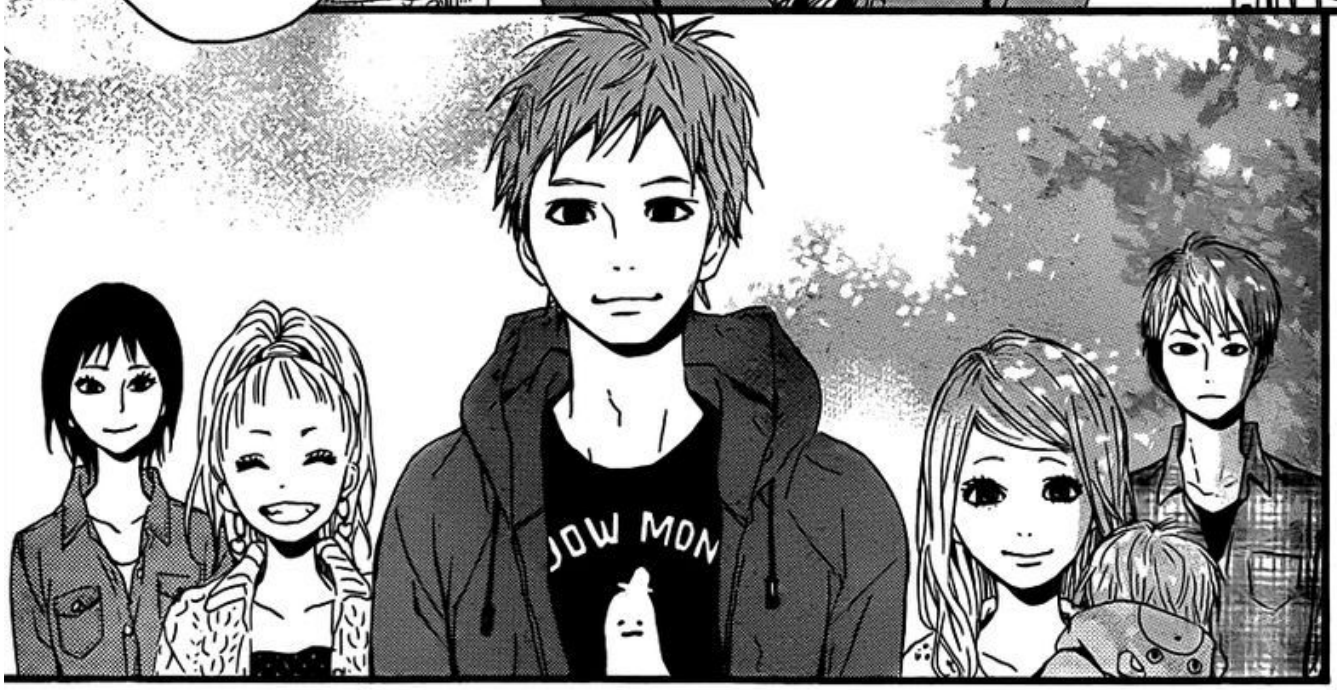
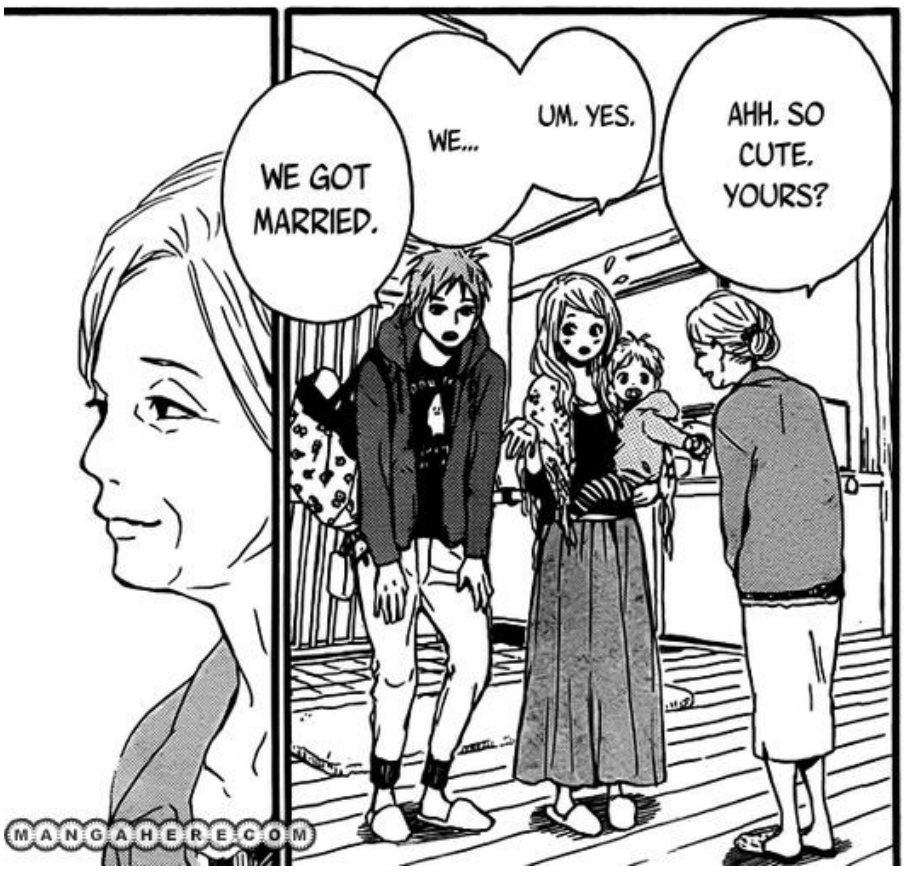
SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING.

PLEASE, STAY AND TALK ABOUT KAKERU AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.





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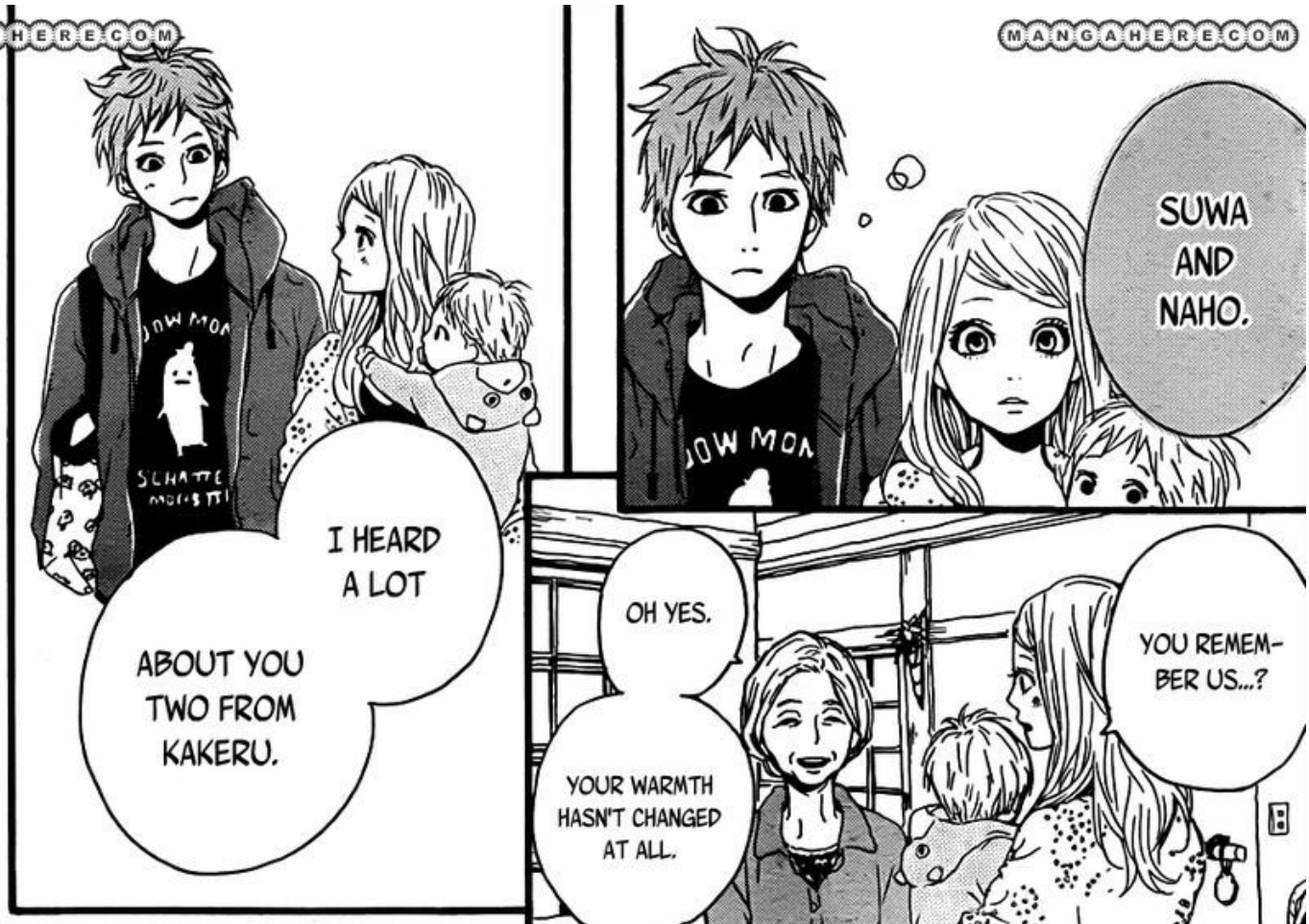

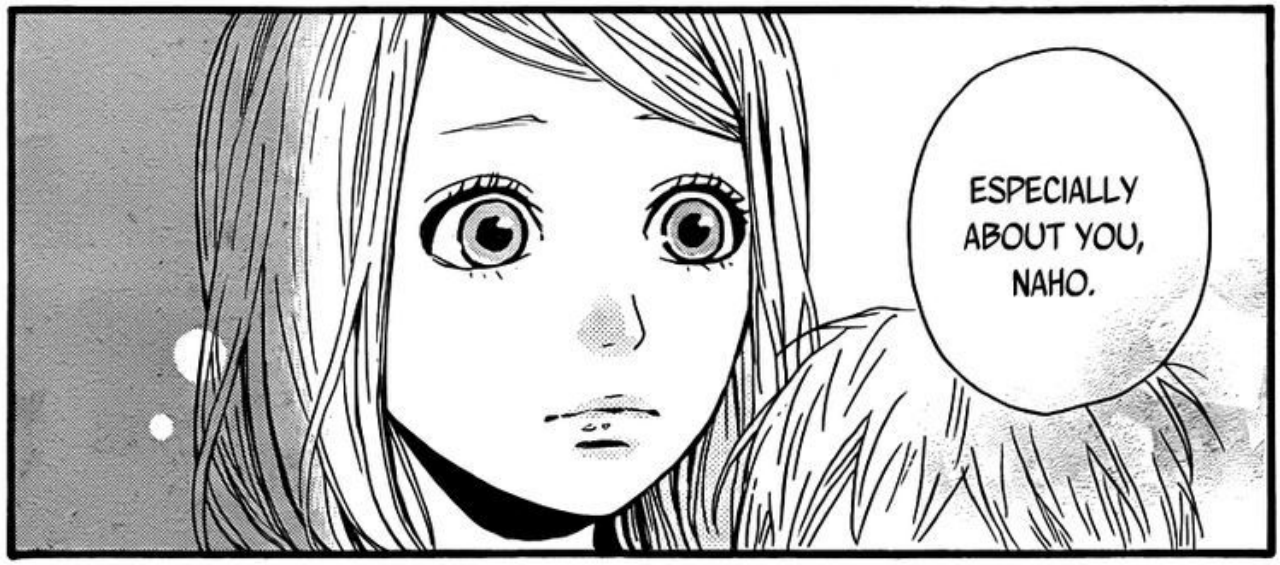

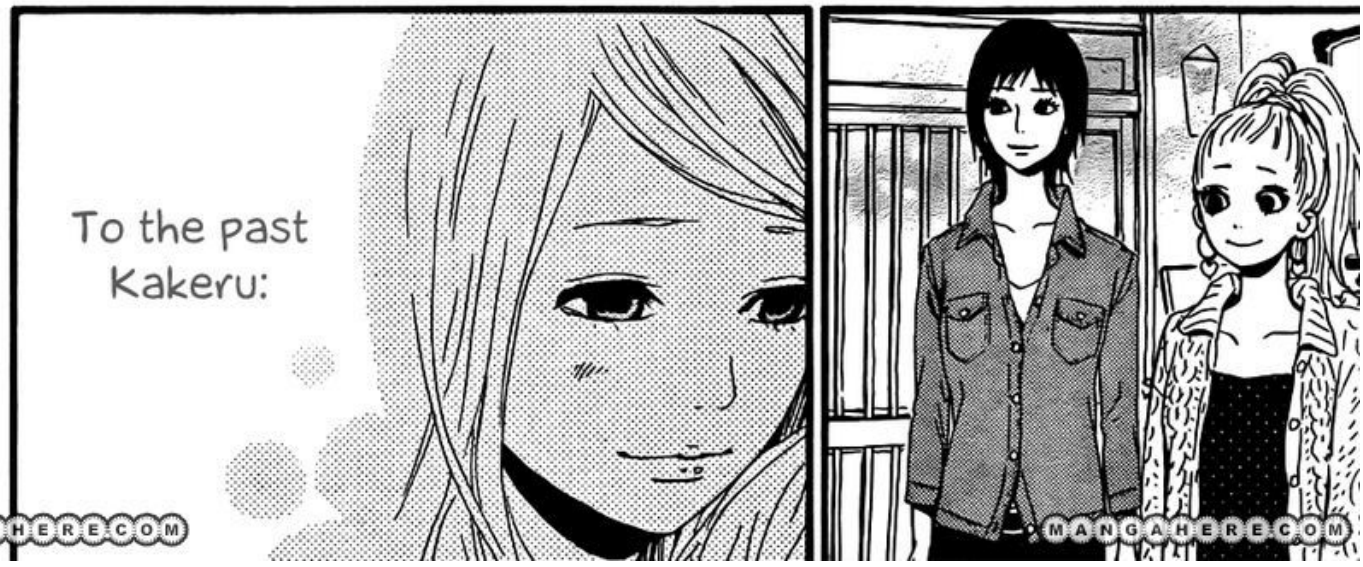

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I wanted to talk more.

I am so sorry that I didn't help you.

There were things that I wanted to tell you.

And things I wanted to hear from you.

I regret not having the courage to talk to you about it.

That day, what did you want to tell me?

"NAHO!"

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Even now, ten years later,

I've thought about it.

MAY 5TH (SAT)

I WENT TO PARCO WITH AZU, TAKA, SUWA, AND HAGITA.

I BOUGHT MATCHING FLOWER PATTERNED SHORT PANTS WITH AZU AND TAKA.

THEY ARE REALLY CUTE, BUT REALLY SHORT...

It was huge.

MINE WAS CALPIS* FLA-VORED.

AFTER THAT, WE HAD SOFTSERVE AT A GOOD LUCK SHRINE.

*T/N: Calpis is a carbonated yogurt drink.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACT WHEN I SEE HIM.

GOLDEN WEEK STARTS THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW AND WE CAN GET TOGETHER THEN.

KAKERU HAD A DATE WITH UEDA, SO HE COULDN'T COME.

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MORNING.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

THE NOTE THAT KAKERU WROTE TO ME AND MY "NO" REPLY.

BATAN

MO-MORNING.

WHY DIDN'T YOU WAKE ME UP THIS MORNING?

UH...

I OVER-SLEPT A LITTLE.

...SORRY.

IT'S FINE. DID YOU FORGET?

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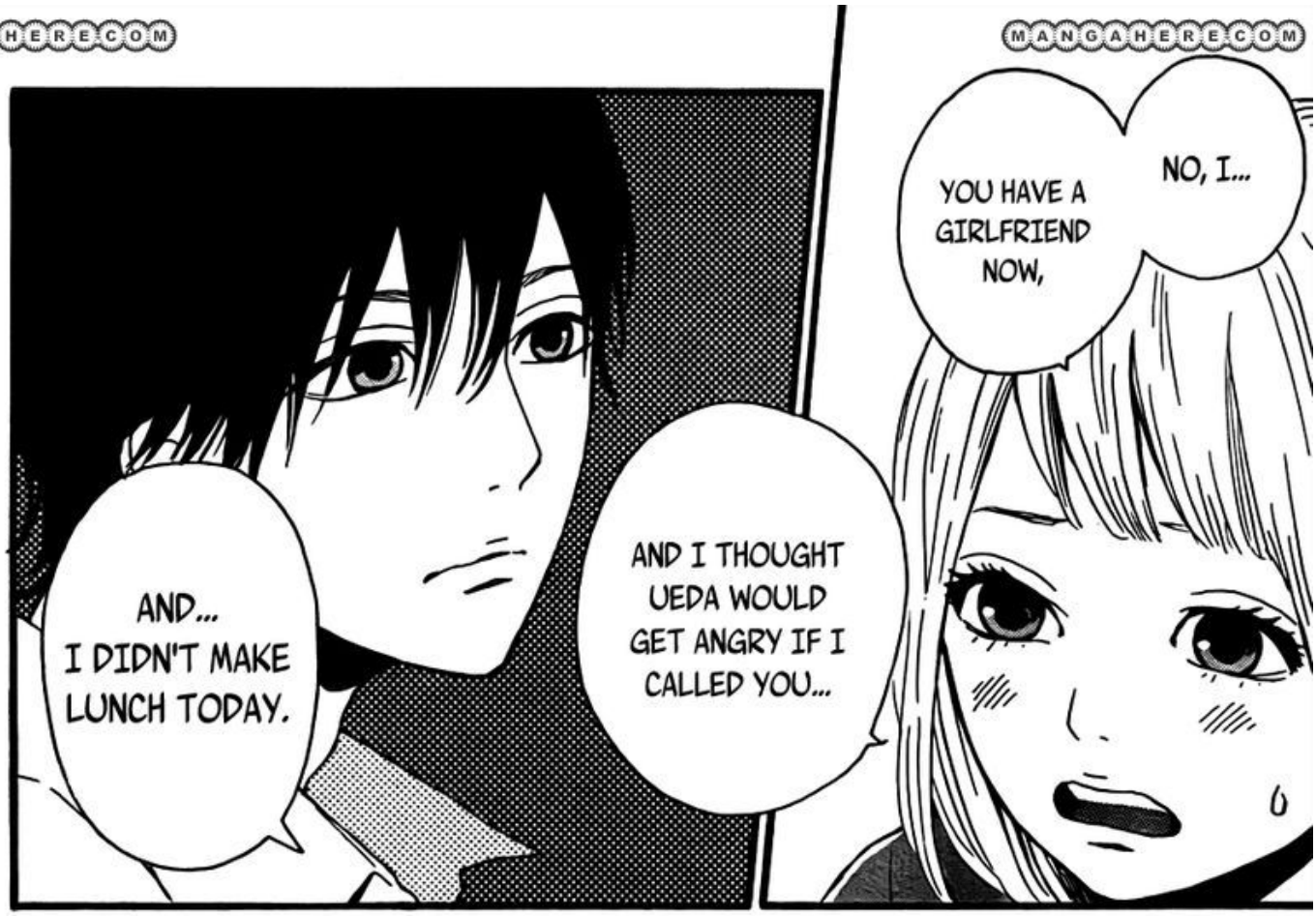

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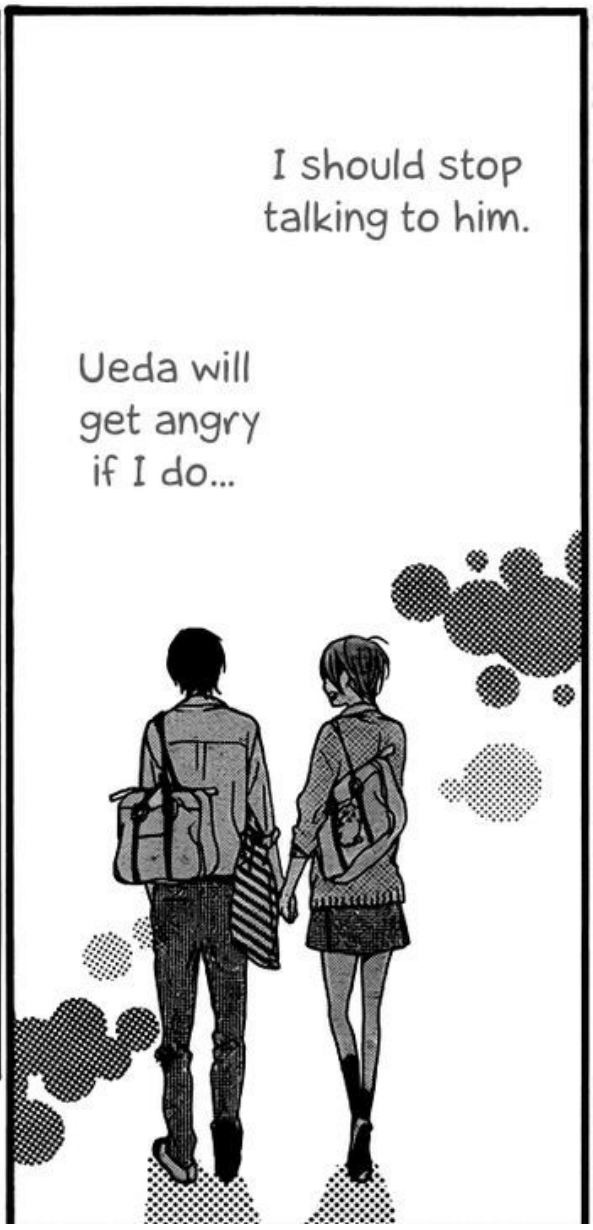

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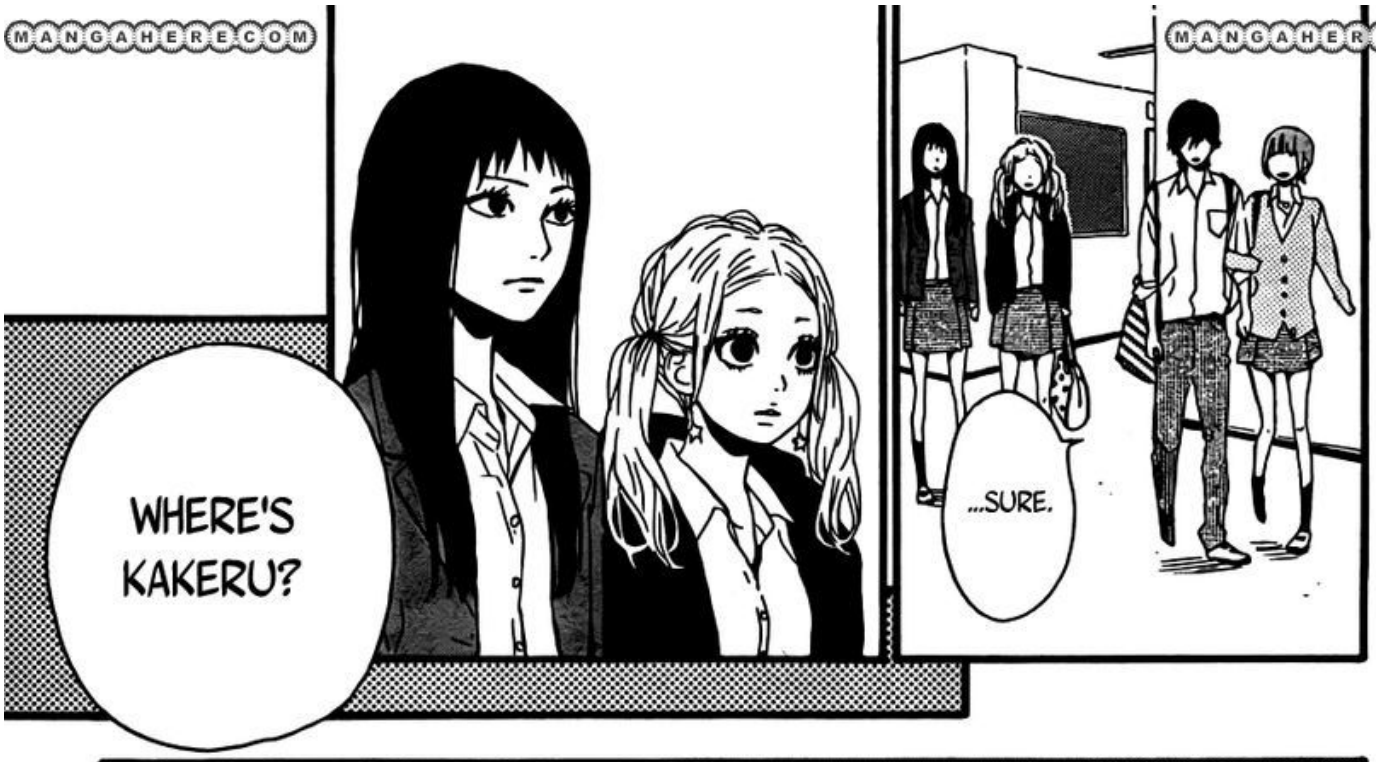

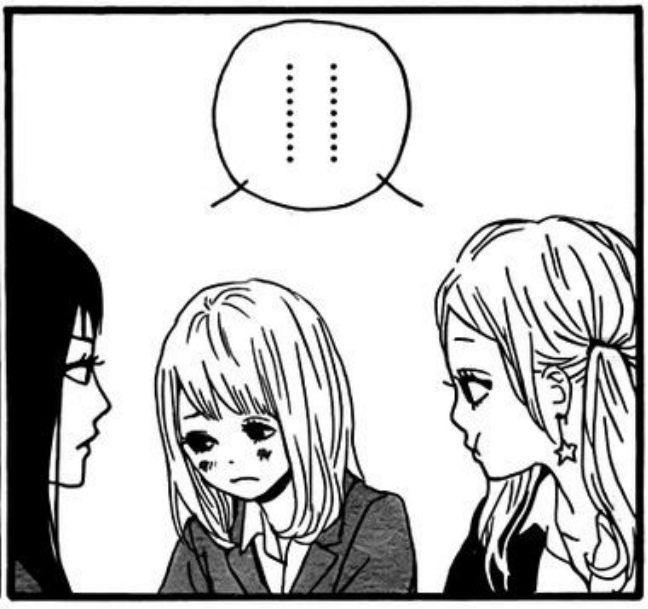

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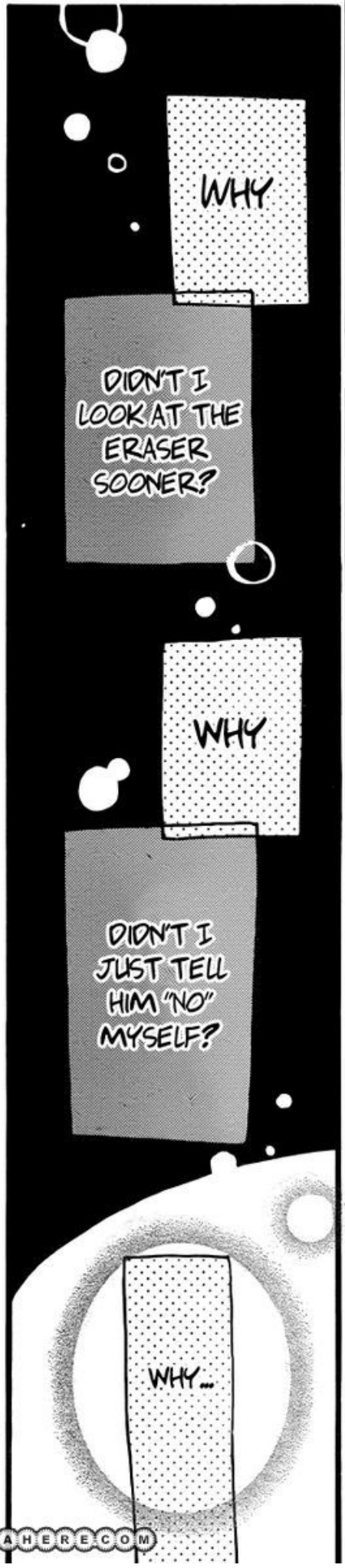

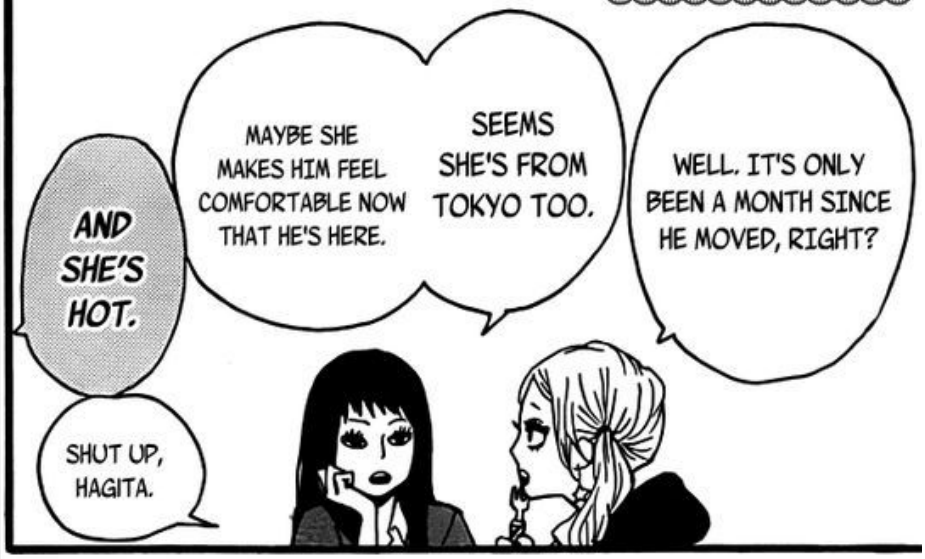

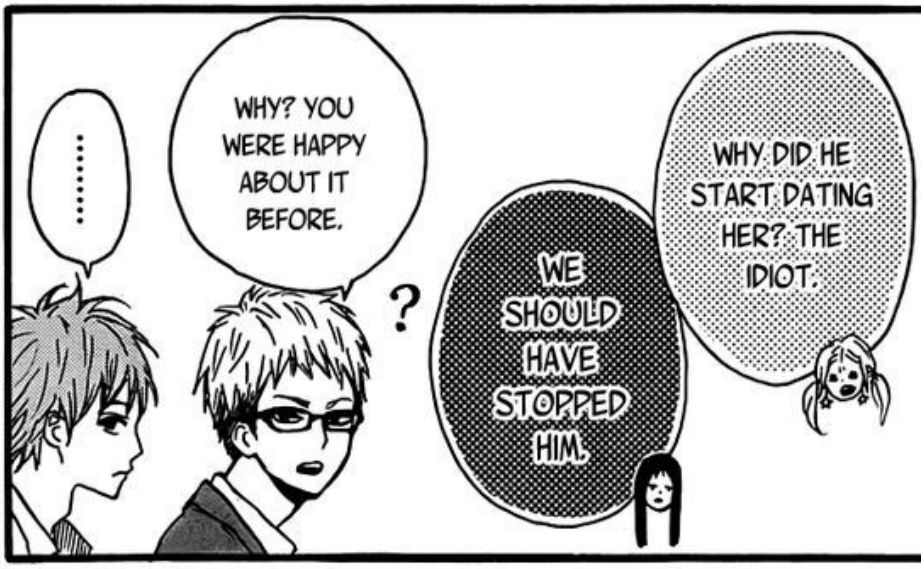

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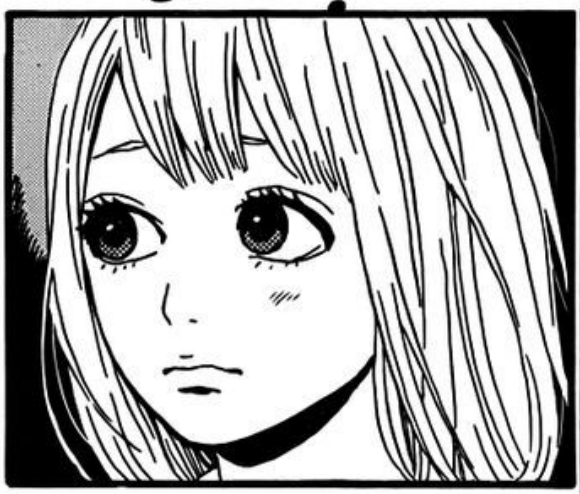
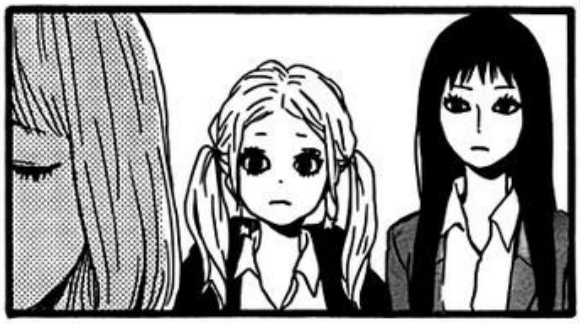
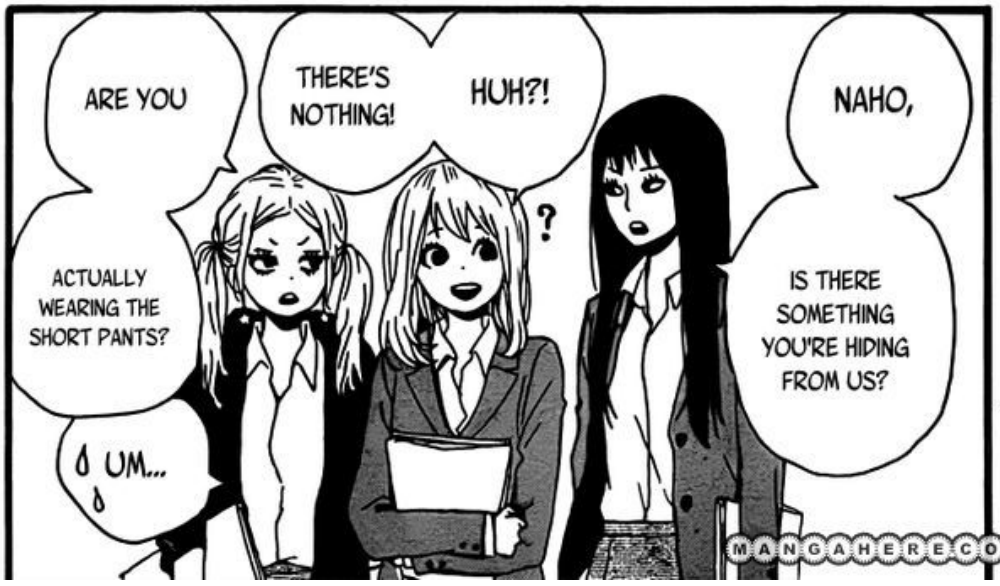
I guess living without regrets is hard.

I know what will happen

and I still choose myself.







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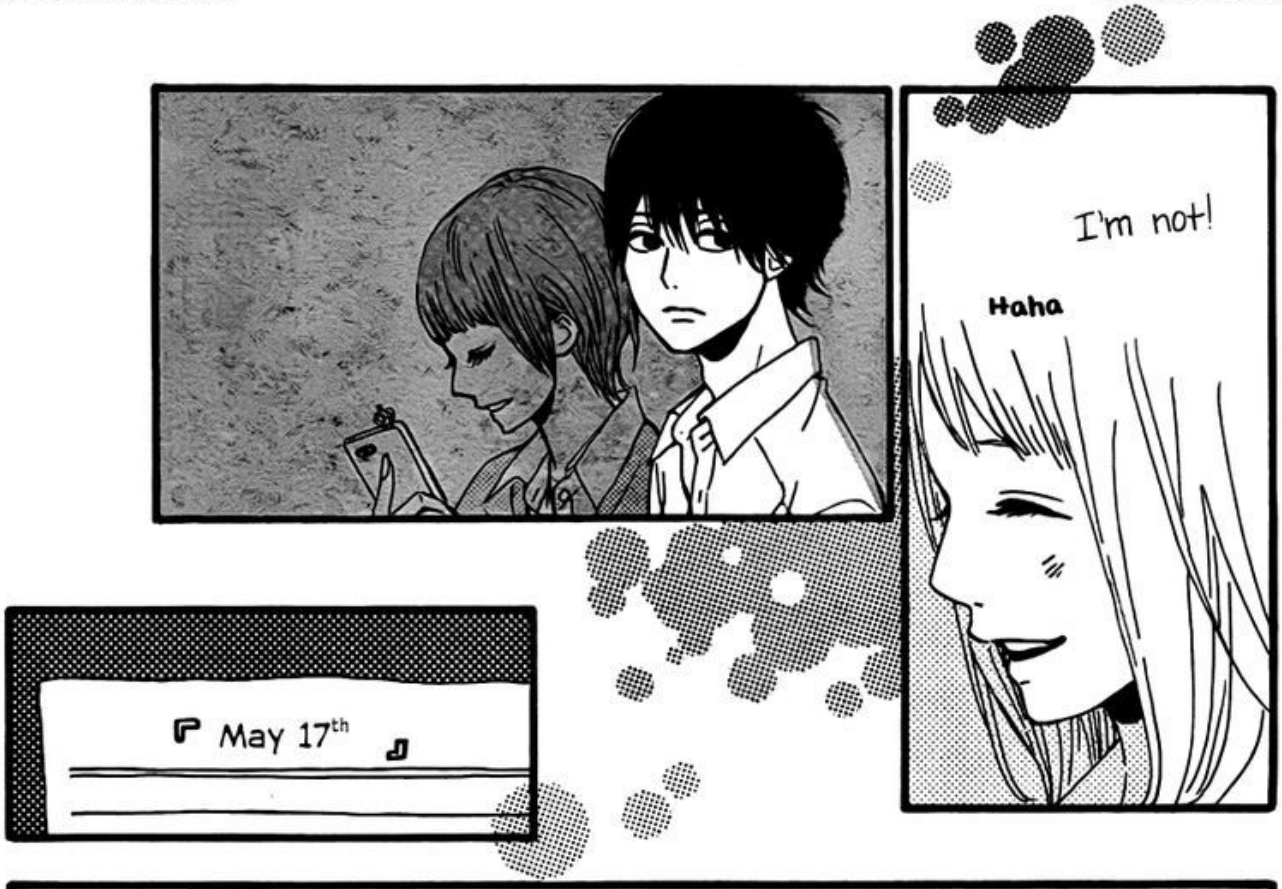

「 May 17th 」

- After Kakeru and Ueda started dating, Kakeru and I stopped talking to each other.
- Today was the start. During lunch, even though Kakeru called out to me, when Ueda saw us, I ran away.
- After that, I constantly avoided Kakeru.

◎ I want you to answer when he calls you.

Don't just wait, tell him what you really think.

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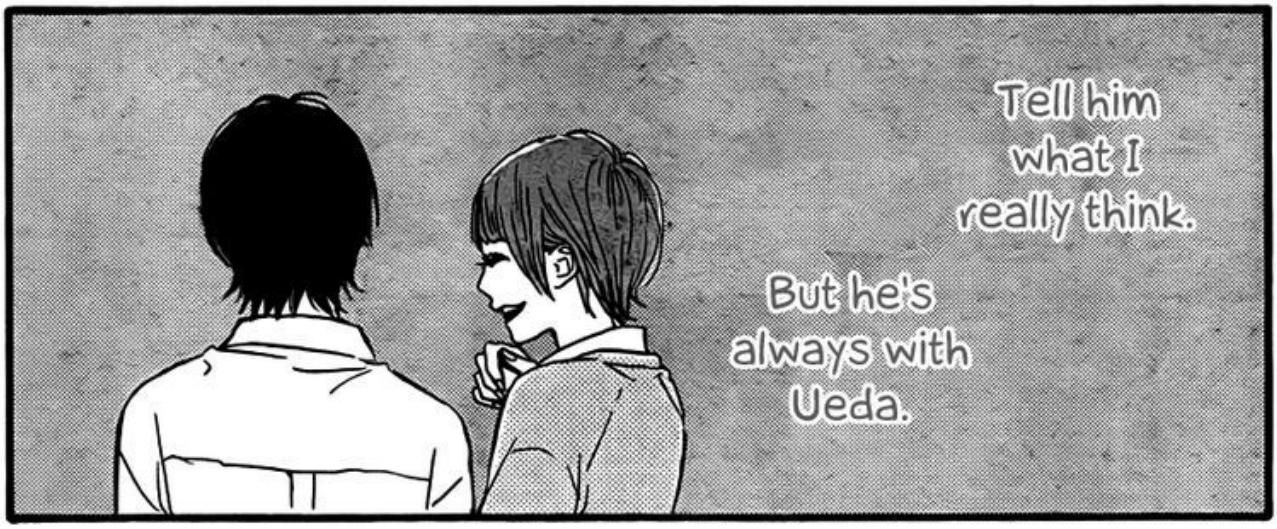

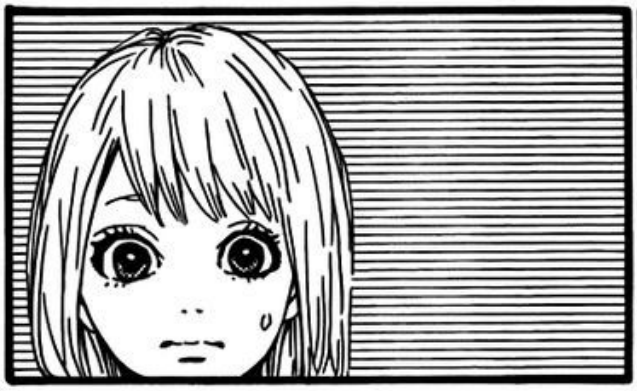

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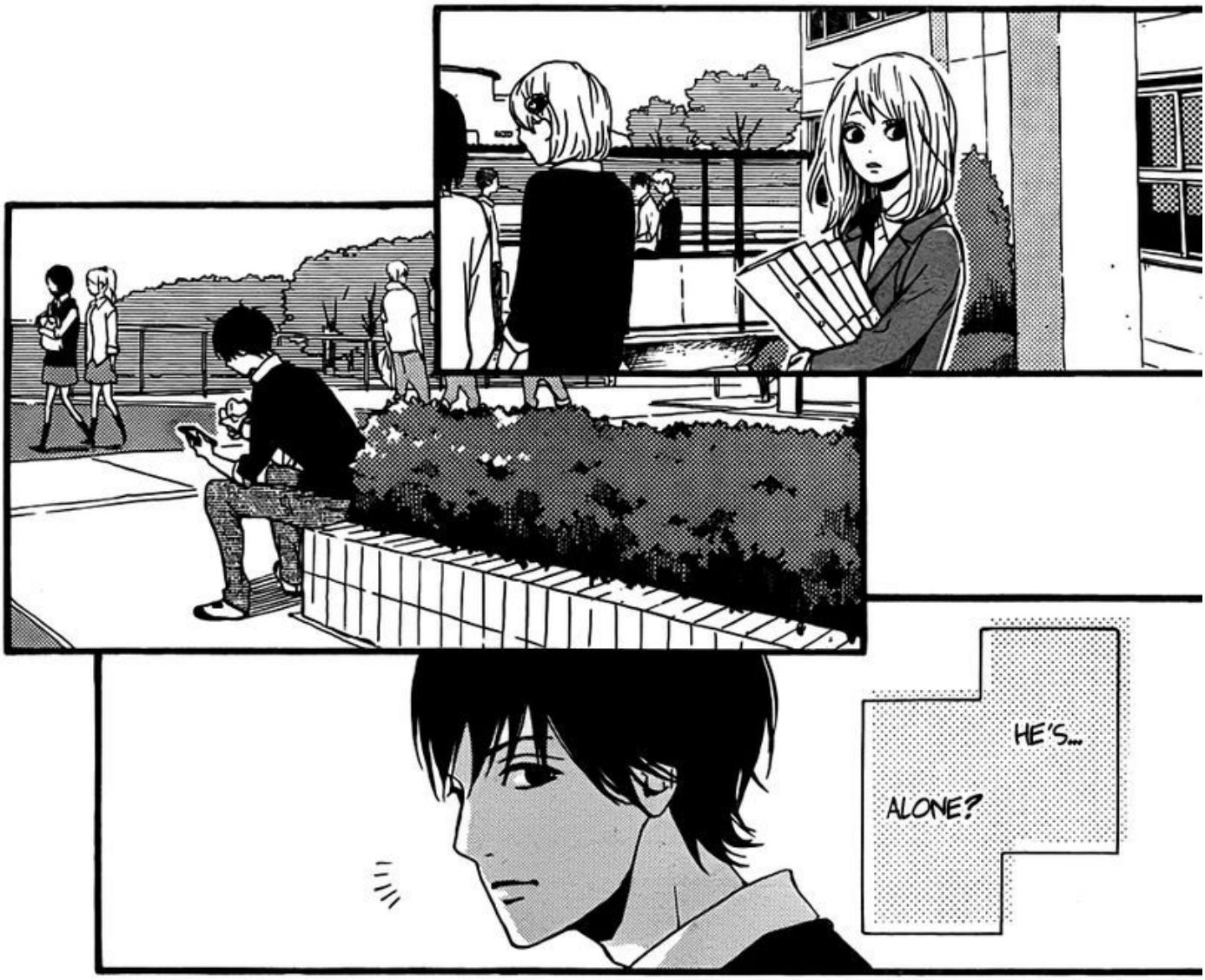

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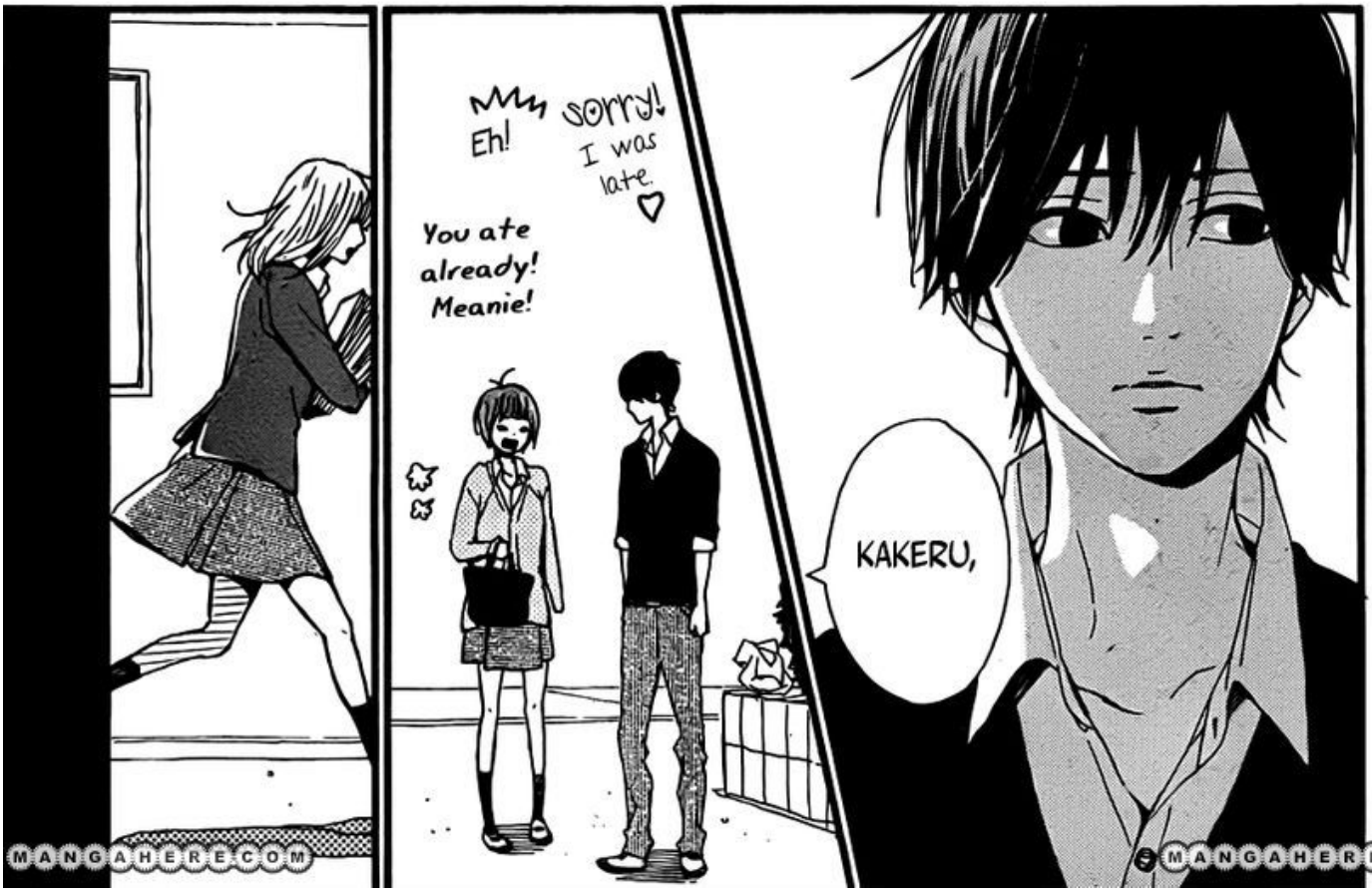

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"If I had acted differently."

I can't...

I just can't...

That must be because she's in the future.

It's easier to say that after the fact.

But at that time, it was all I could do.

What if he doesn't turn around when I call him?

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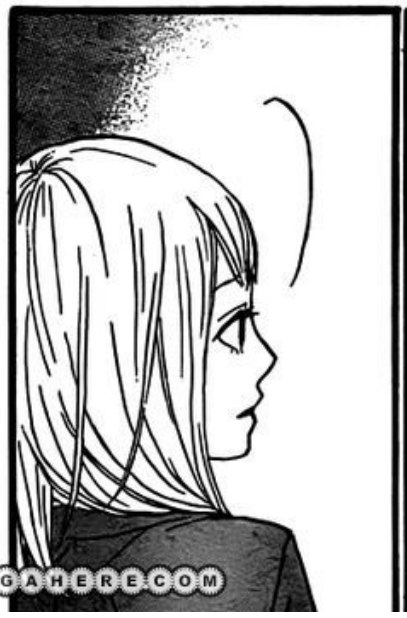
「 May 21st 」

- After class, Kakeru said, "Bye" to me and he and Ueda got into a fight.
- But afterwards, I went home without doing anything about it.
- I know that afterwards, Kakeru was worried about it.



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I think that Kakeru regretted it.

...KA...

KAKERU...

I wish I had noticed he was worried and actually talked to him.

All I could do was think about myself.

WAIT!

KAKERU--

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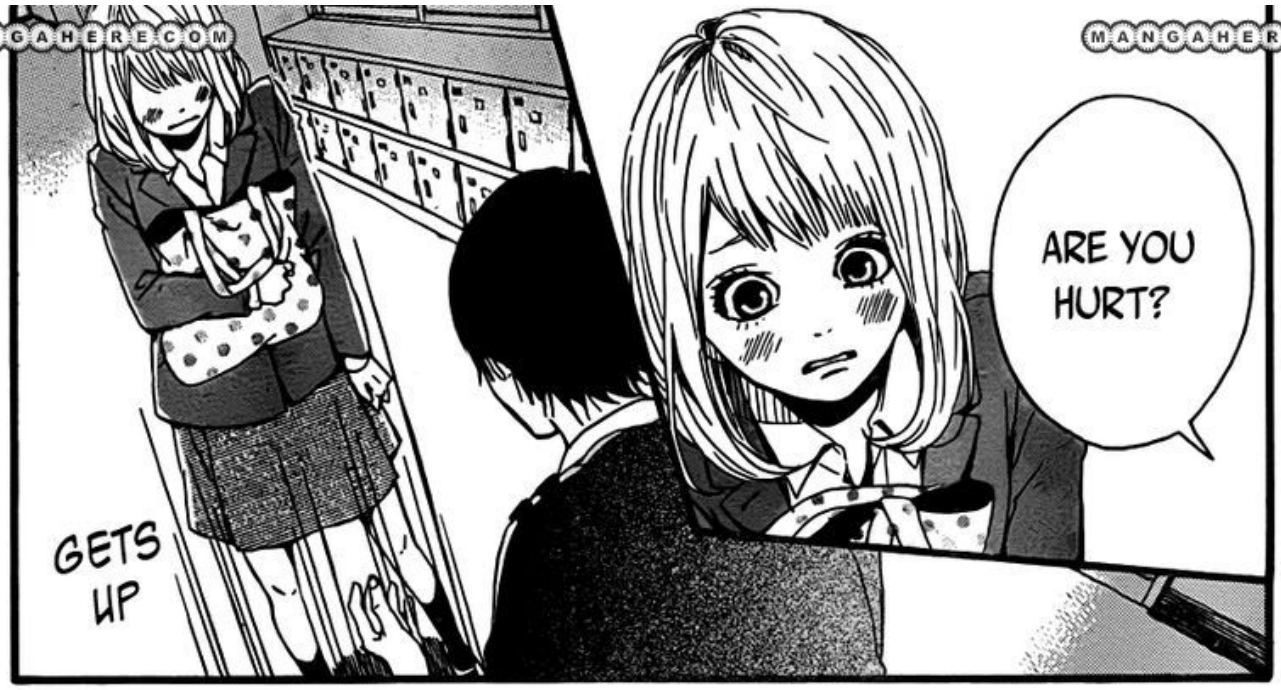

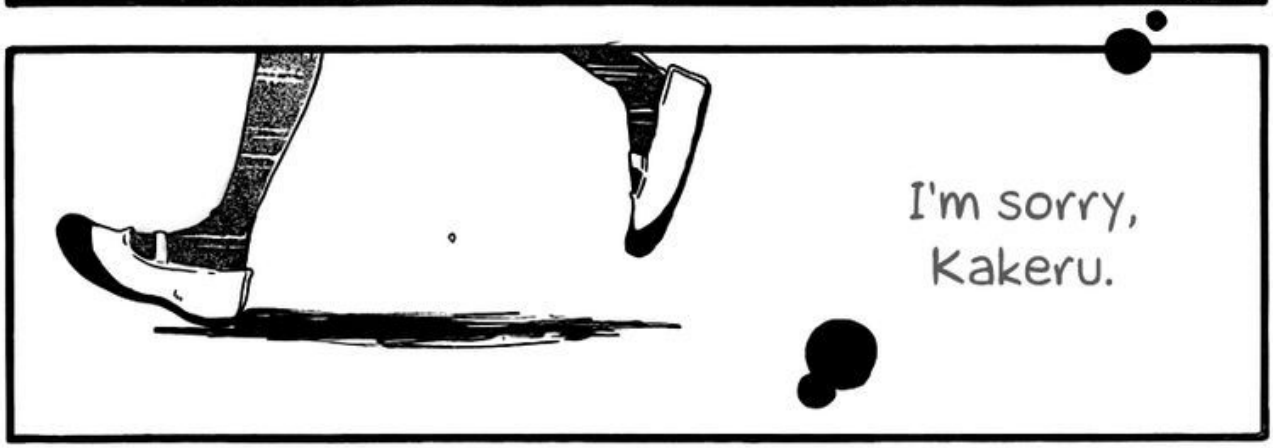

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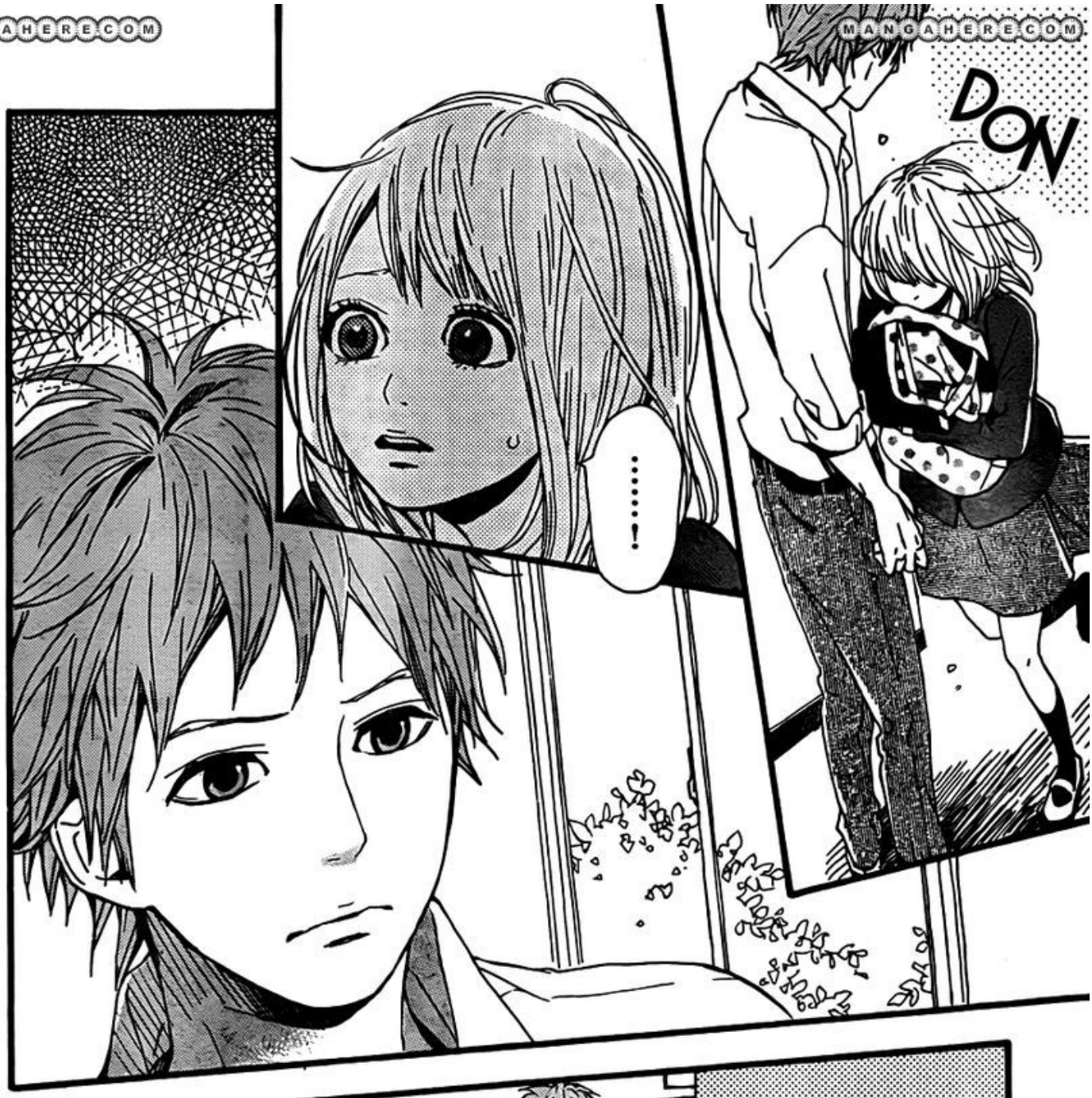

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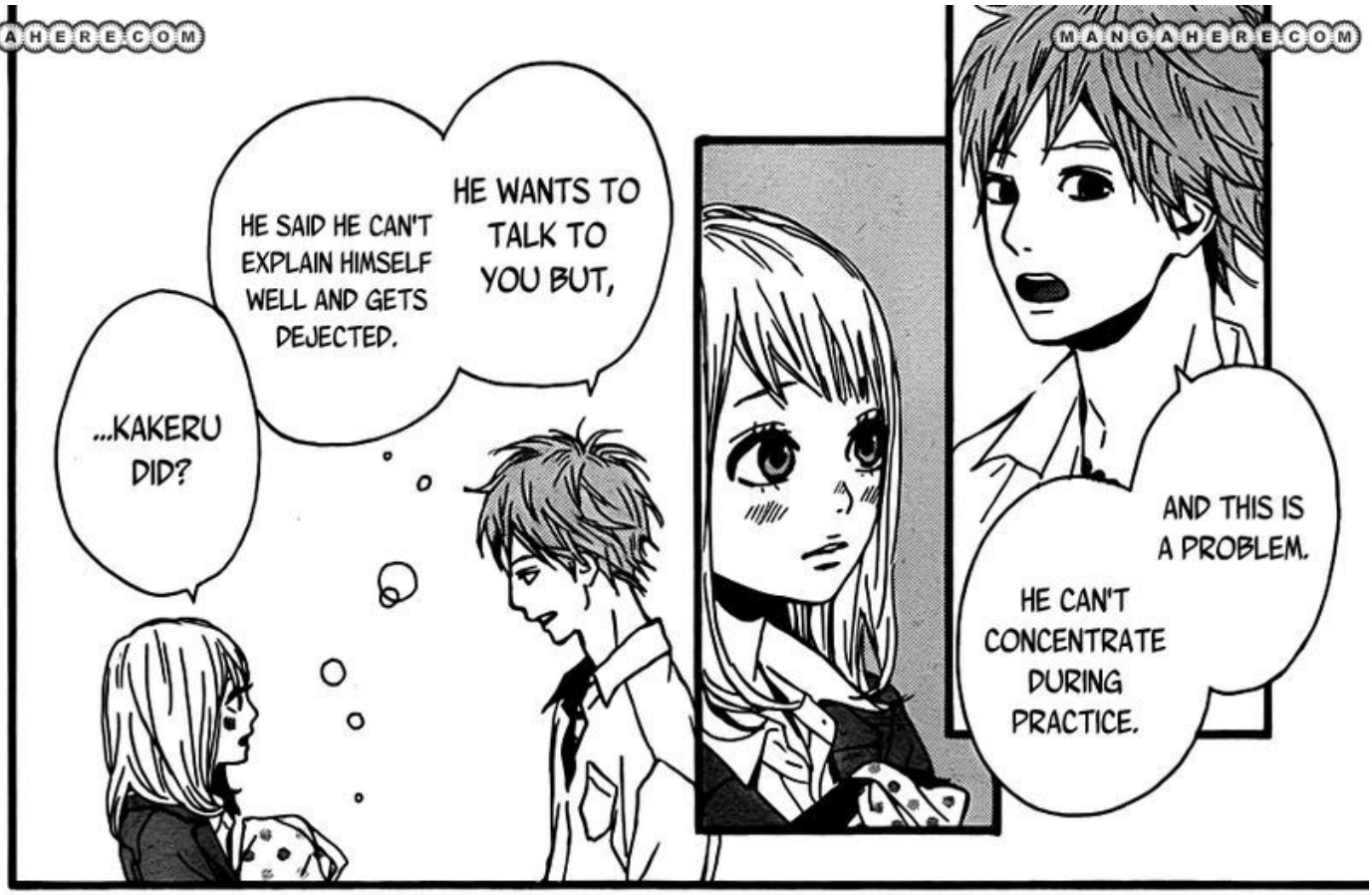

I was always super aware of Ueda.

Was I actually seeing Kakeru?

IF YOU RUN AWAY,

THEN HE CAN'T TALK TO YOU.

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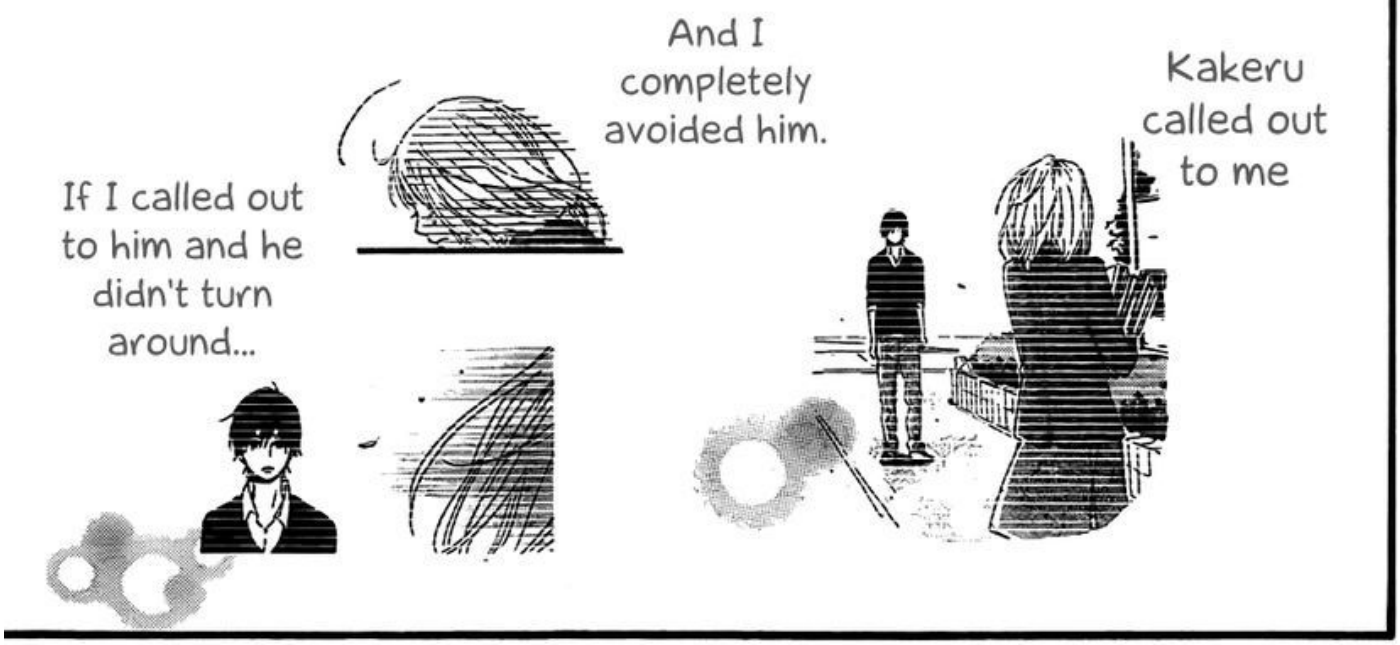

Even though I was worried about that,

I did something to him I never wanted to.

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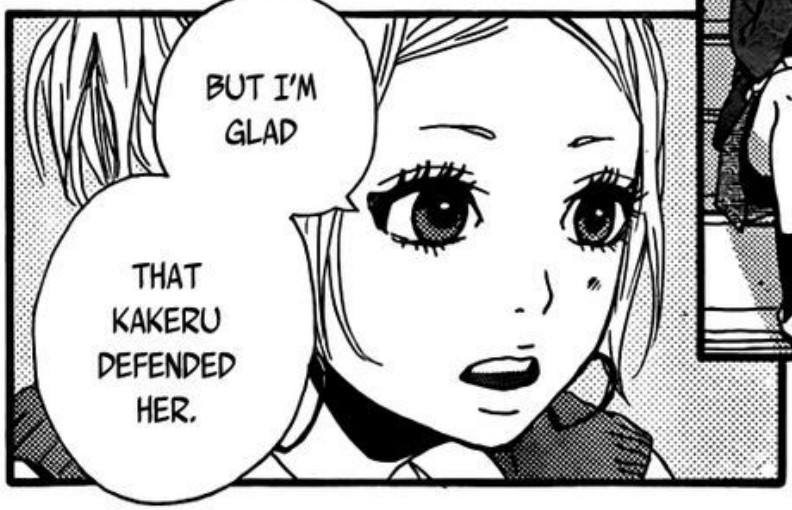
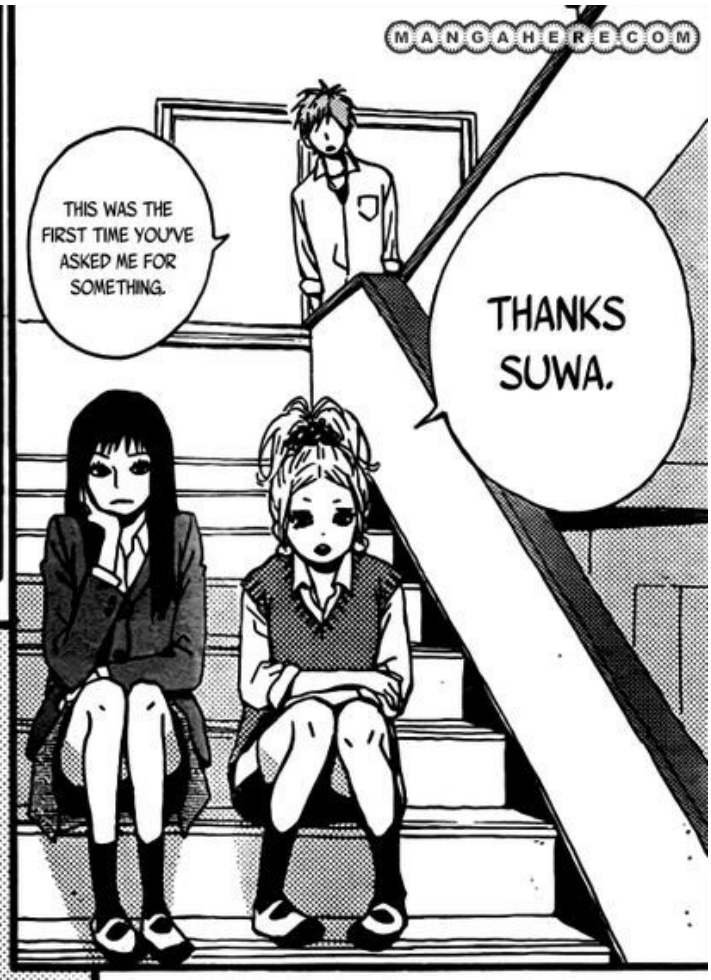
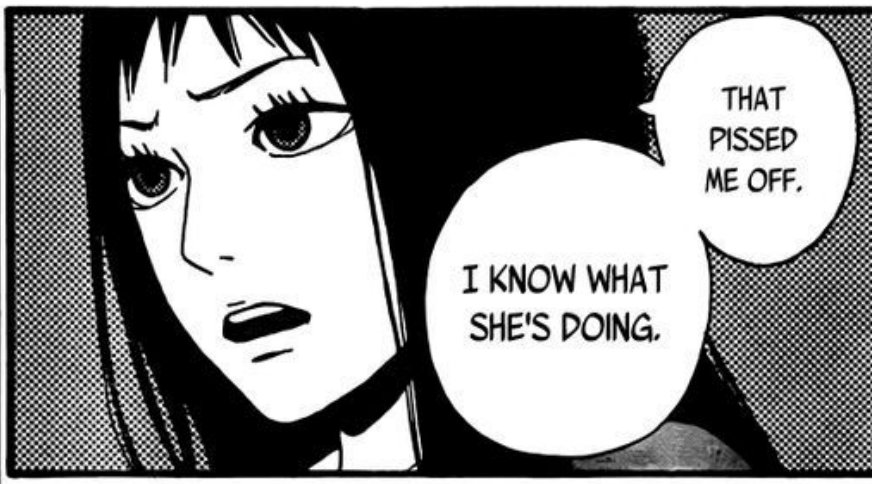




The me ten years from now

has regretted this this whole time.



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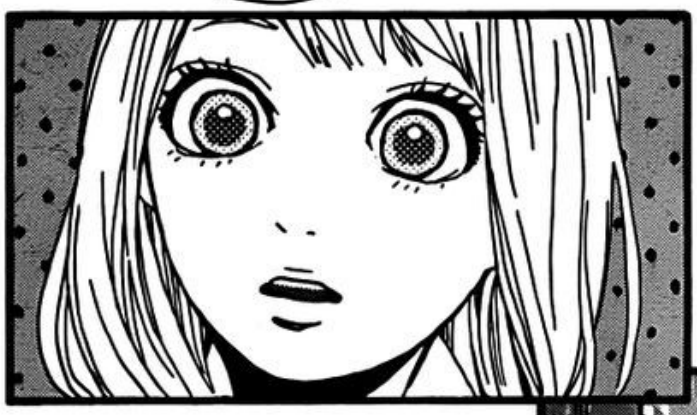
I want to treasure this.

This one second,

this one moment.



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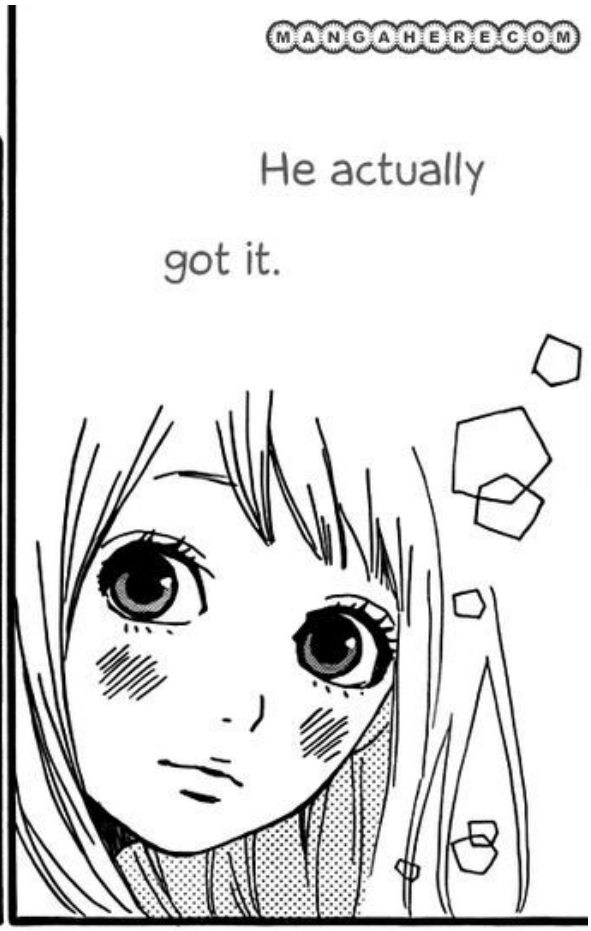

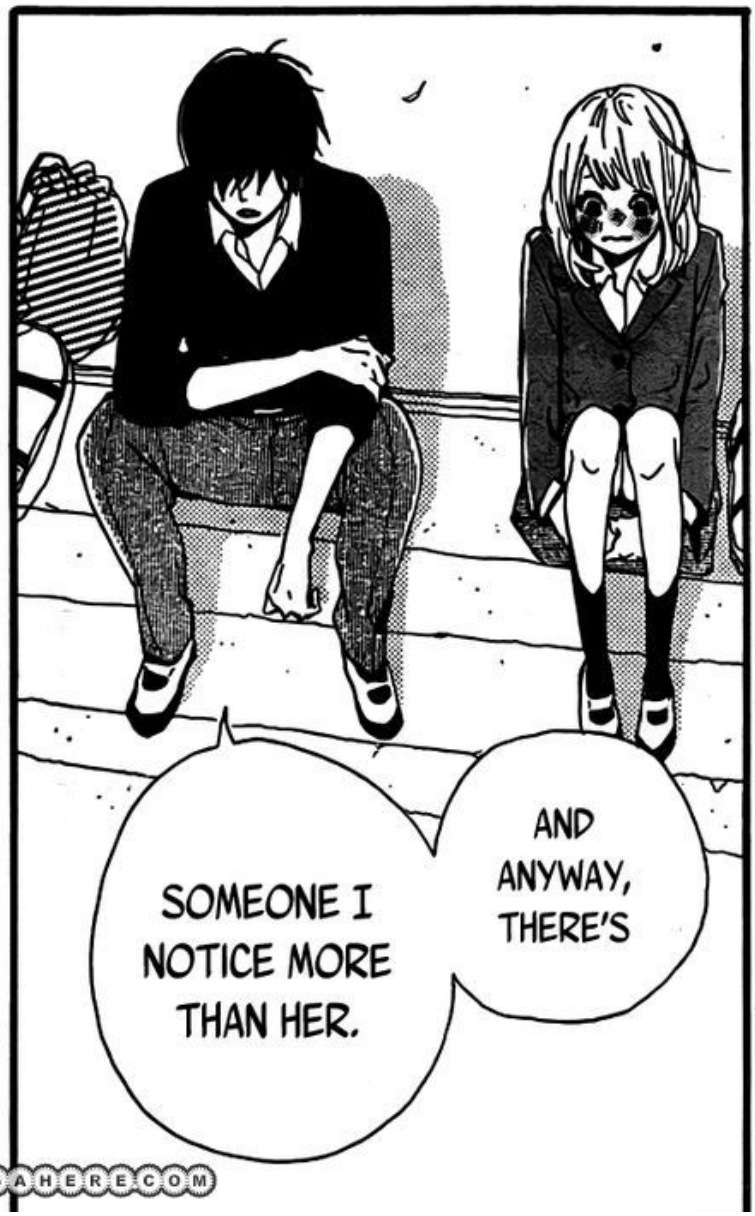

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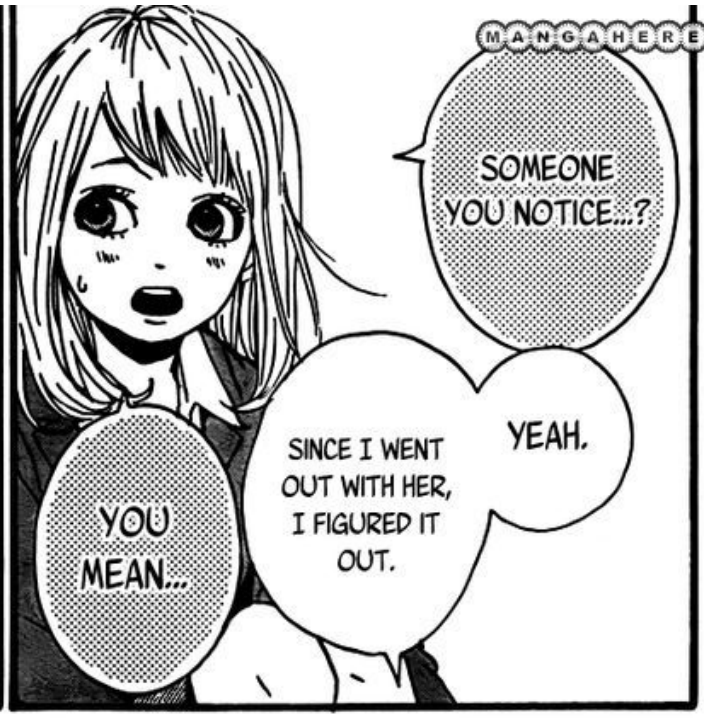

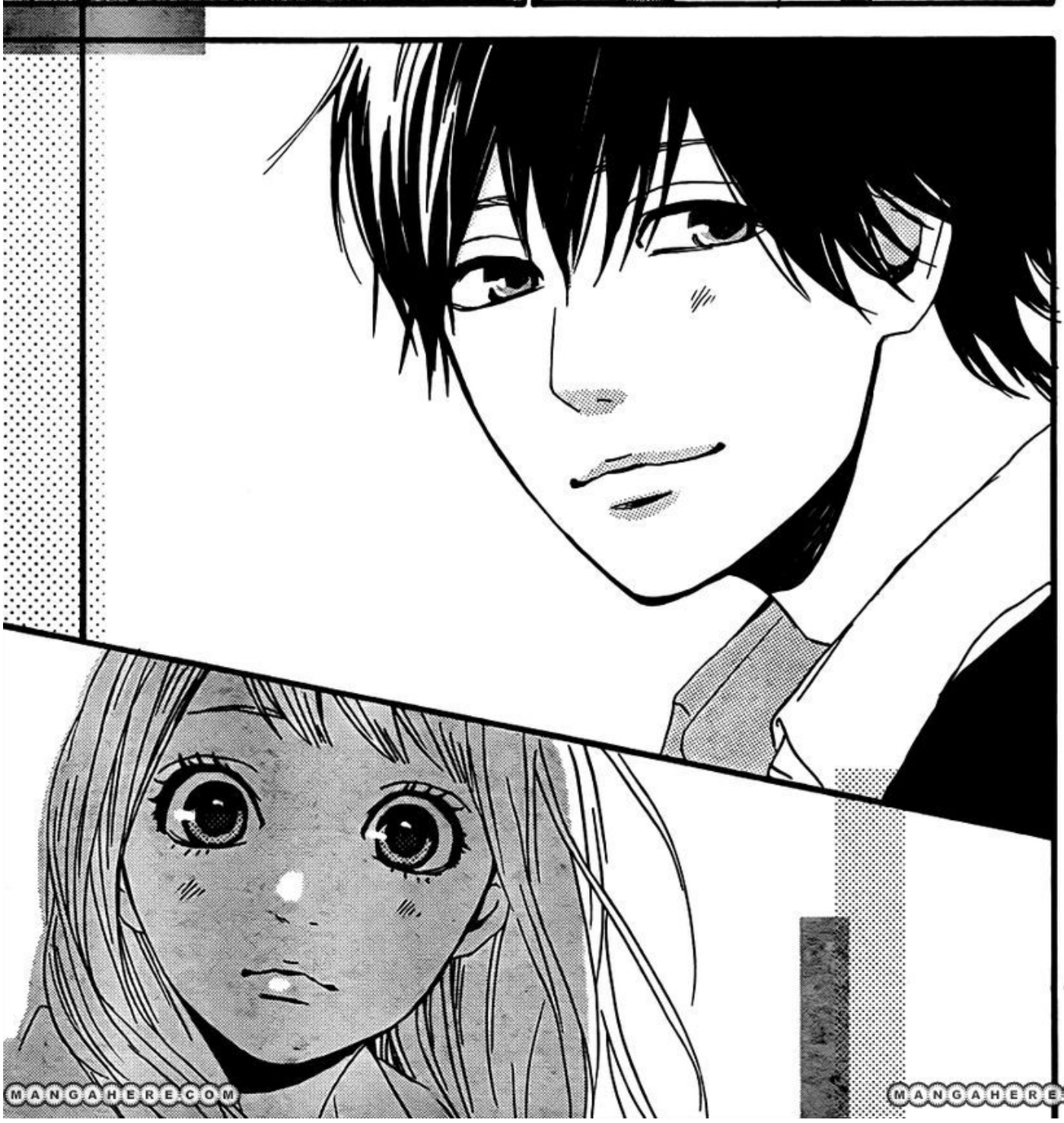

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Does the me in the future know who Kakeru noticed?

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THE YOUTH STORY WITH THE BIG ECHO!

Everything is becoming a little bit clearer about Kakeru.

On the other hand, what about high school Naho and Kakeru?

What everyone has been waiting for.

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7/25 Wed Release!

高野苺 Takano Ichigo

cover + color page 46p!

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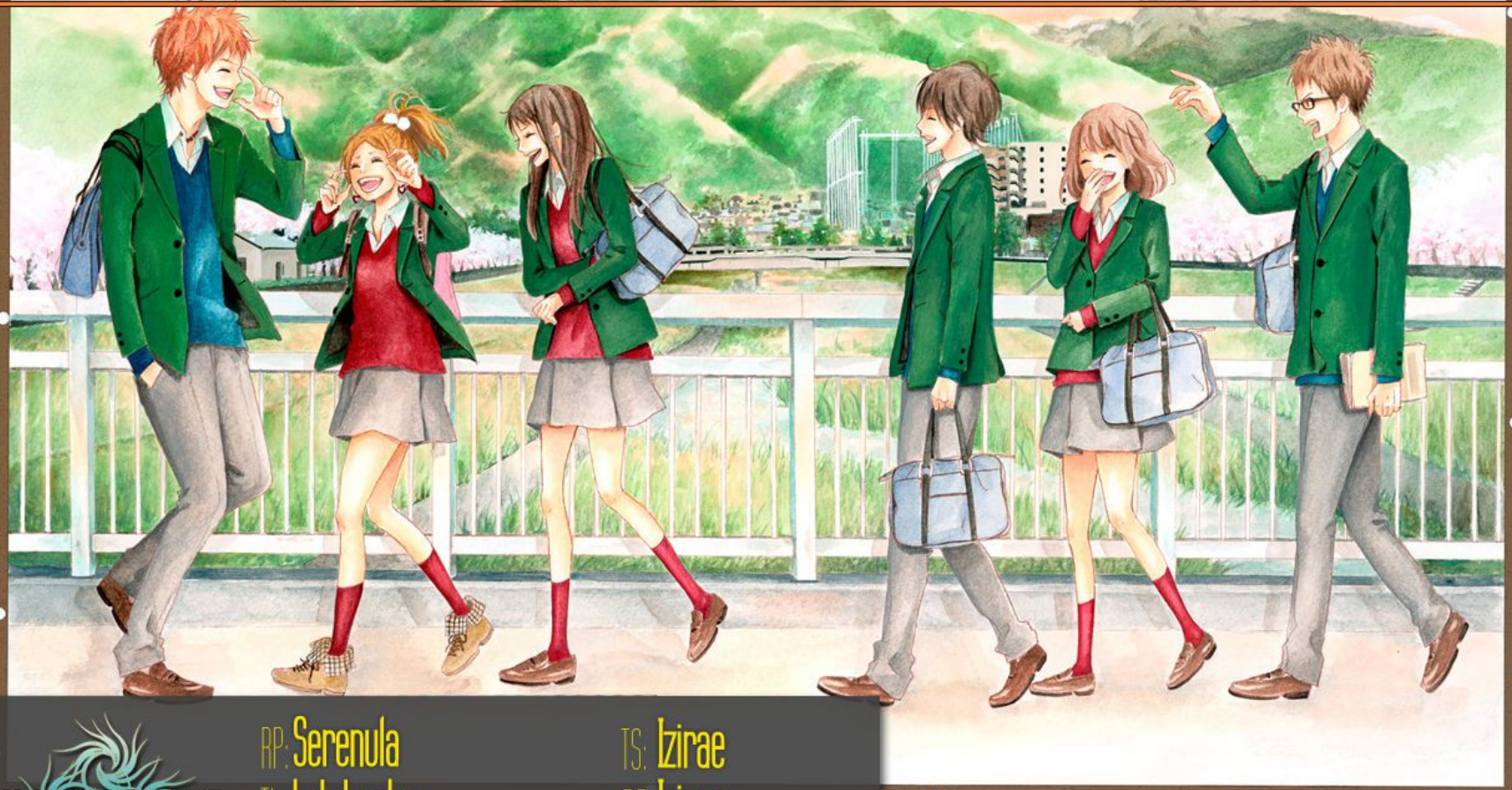

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no. 1

Let's go into Naho's world for a little bit.

Orange

a trip to

Orange is set in Nagano Prefecture's Matsumoto City

The eagerly anticipated volume 1 is close!! Let's take a special trip into that world. There are also presents!

Marked with a cute antique style cover!

It's also along the back cover too!

In Nagano Prefecture's Matsumoto City

The Spring I was 16.

The Miracle that connected us.

ORANGE IS SET IN NAGANO PREFECTURE'S MATSUMOTO CITY. FEEL THE TASTEFULLY LINED STREETS AND THE BEAUTIFUL NATURE.

VOLUME 1 COMES OUT ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

Special gifts for 100 people

Souvenirs from both Naho & Kakeru

3 A Furoshiki bag for 2 people
A ring and cloth back. Even though it's cloth, you can use it like a regular bag.

2 A set of two laminated hair clips for 2 people
A blue and orange hair clip set. One step to girly.

4 Candle Aluminum For 1 person
Light the candle and spin the animals to create a doubling effect

5 Coin Purse for 3 people
Put your spare change in! Leave the picking to the editorial staff!

1 A set of 4 color illustration post cards for 92 people

SUPPORT TAKANO ICHIGO BY PURCHASING THIS MANGA WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

応募券 別マ8月号 orange

次のページにつづくよ!

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a trip to orange

Now to introduce the Matsumoto that Naho and her friends live in.

Now, let's head to Matsumoto. Let's go on a walk through town by illustrations!

Matsumoto Station

The beginning of the Matsumoto Tourist trail. This station has a 100 year history, but was beautifully reconstructed along with the public square.

Nawate is a shopping arcade lined with row houses. Buy the famous tayaki and head to the Metoba River bridge and relax. Chapter 3 opening illustration.

Nawate Street to the Bridge

After leaving the entrance to school, Naho and Kakeru went to this park in chapter 2. This is where Naho found out what happened to Kakeru's Mom.

Agata Park

* Betsuma April Cover.

Nakamachi Street Alley

This month's cover illustration. Nakamachi Street has many houses lined together. There are many stylish craft stores here.

From the first chapter's opening illustration. Flowering cherry trees. It's often seen in dram

Susuki River and Chikuma Bridge

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On our way to Kakeru's Grandmother's house,

all of us in the car

talked about what we thought Kakeru would be like as a 26-year-old.

A "PARALLEL WORLD."

46 pages + color opening

orange

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ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

If such a thing could be real

and we were able to change the past

Then a 26-year-old Kakeru would be in my world.

That's what I thought.

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A DEEPENING RIDDLE AND BRIGHT YOUTH.

THE VERY POPULAR SERIAL WITH A COLOR OPENING!!

Who is my destiny connected to?

My past that piled up.

The present where I am.

orange

【オレンジ】

The days you were there and my future.

LETTER 5

The anticipated 1st volume is out on Wed. July 25!

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

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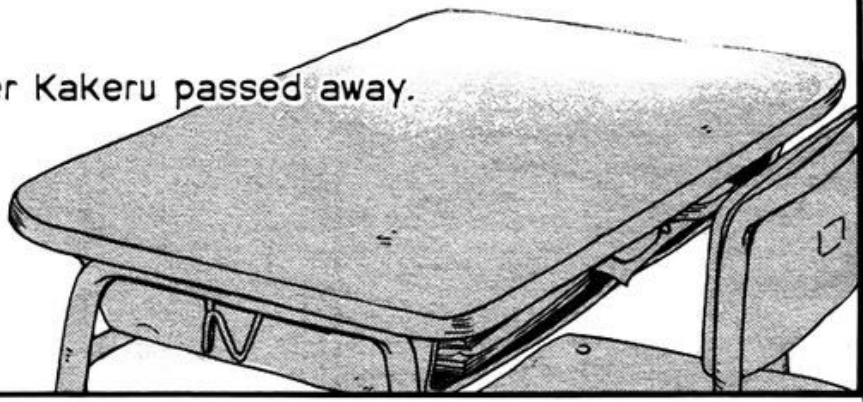
「 May 24th 」

- This day starts a week long absence from school for Kakeru.
- I asked him what happened, but he didn't answer.
- Now I think, it's because it was Kakeru's mother's 49th birthday.

- Kakeru's mother died on the day of opening ceremony.

I asked after Kakeru passed away.



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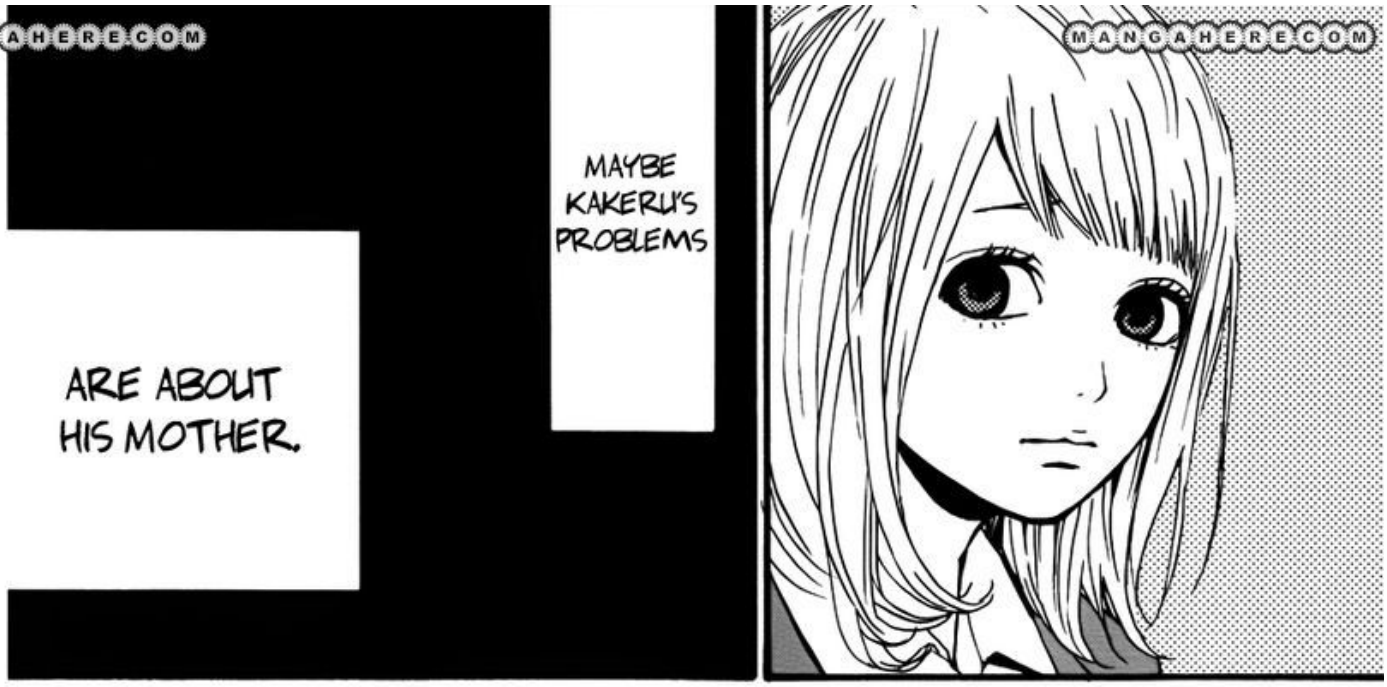

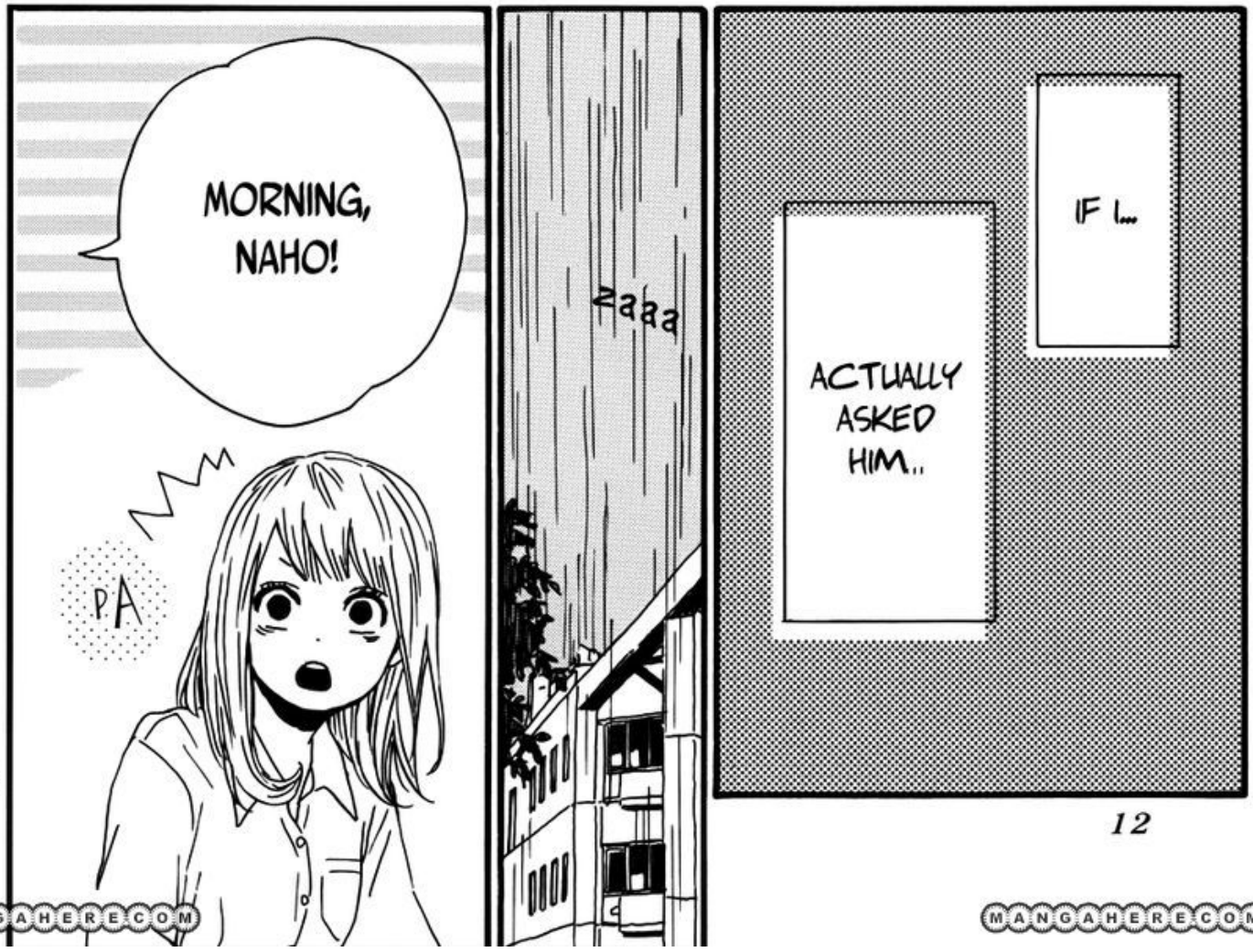

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『 June 21st 』

- It poured all morning.
  (but cleared up in the afternoon)

- I let an absolutely soaked Kakeru borrow my handkerchief.

  I wish I had had a bath towel...

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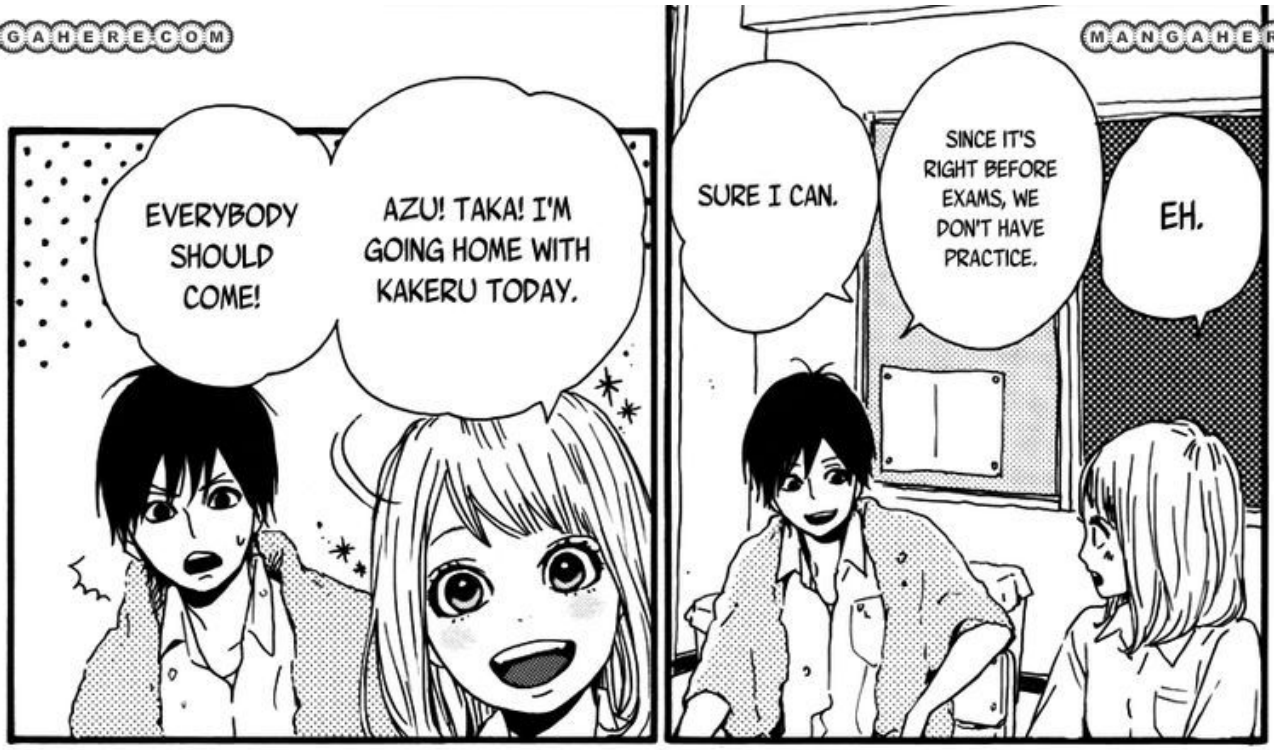

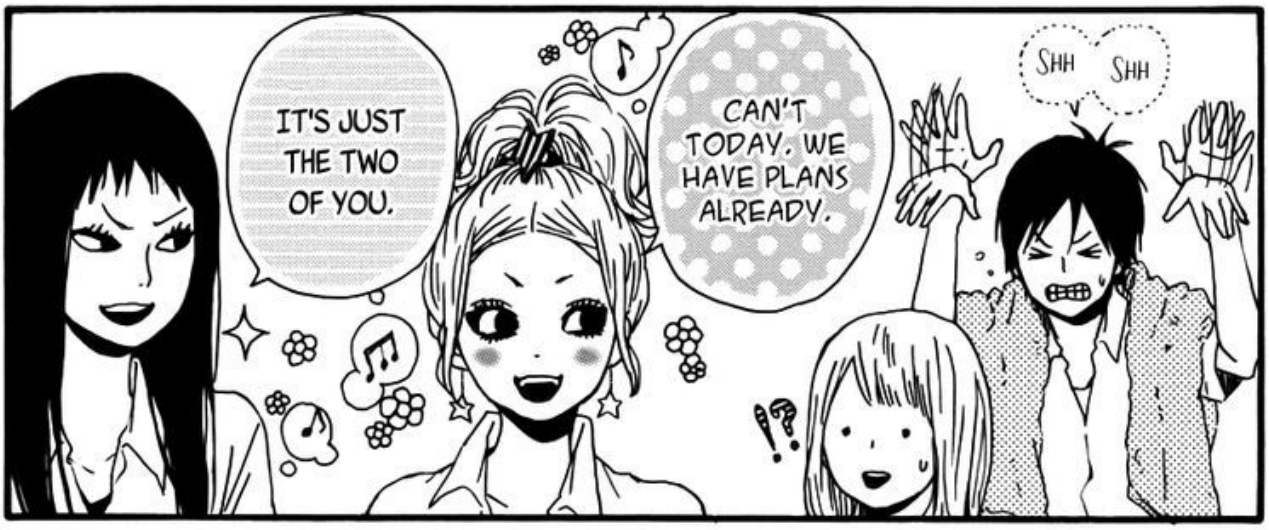

- Before exams, the soccer club doesn't have practice.
- The six of us all go home together for a change.
- After we split up, Kakeru asks me to study together on the weekend.

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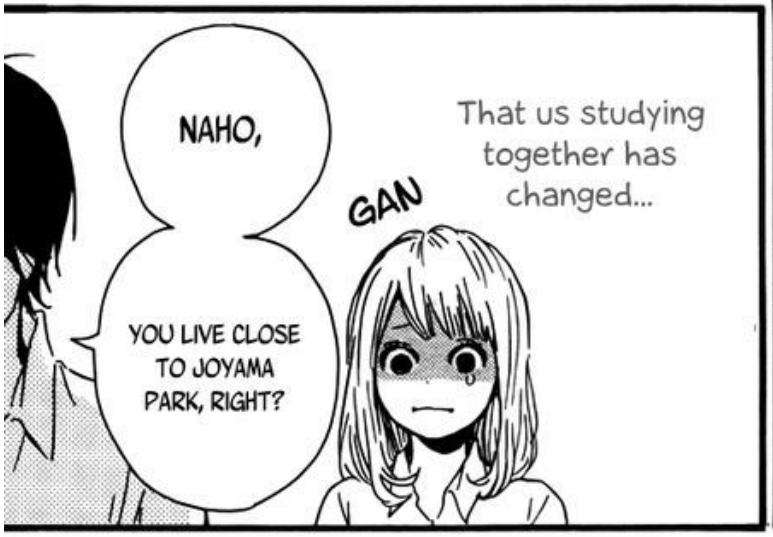

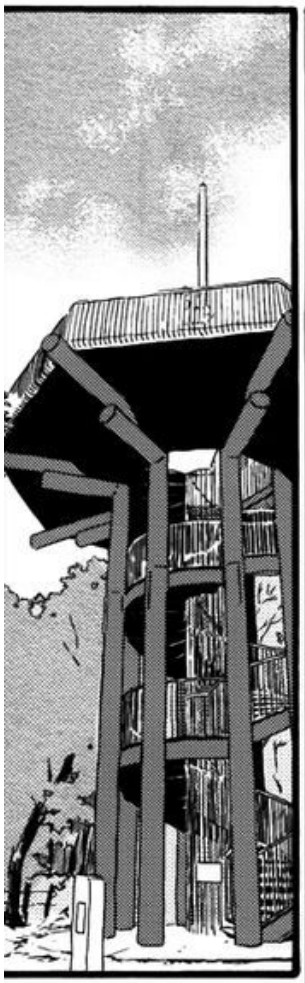

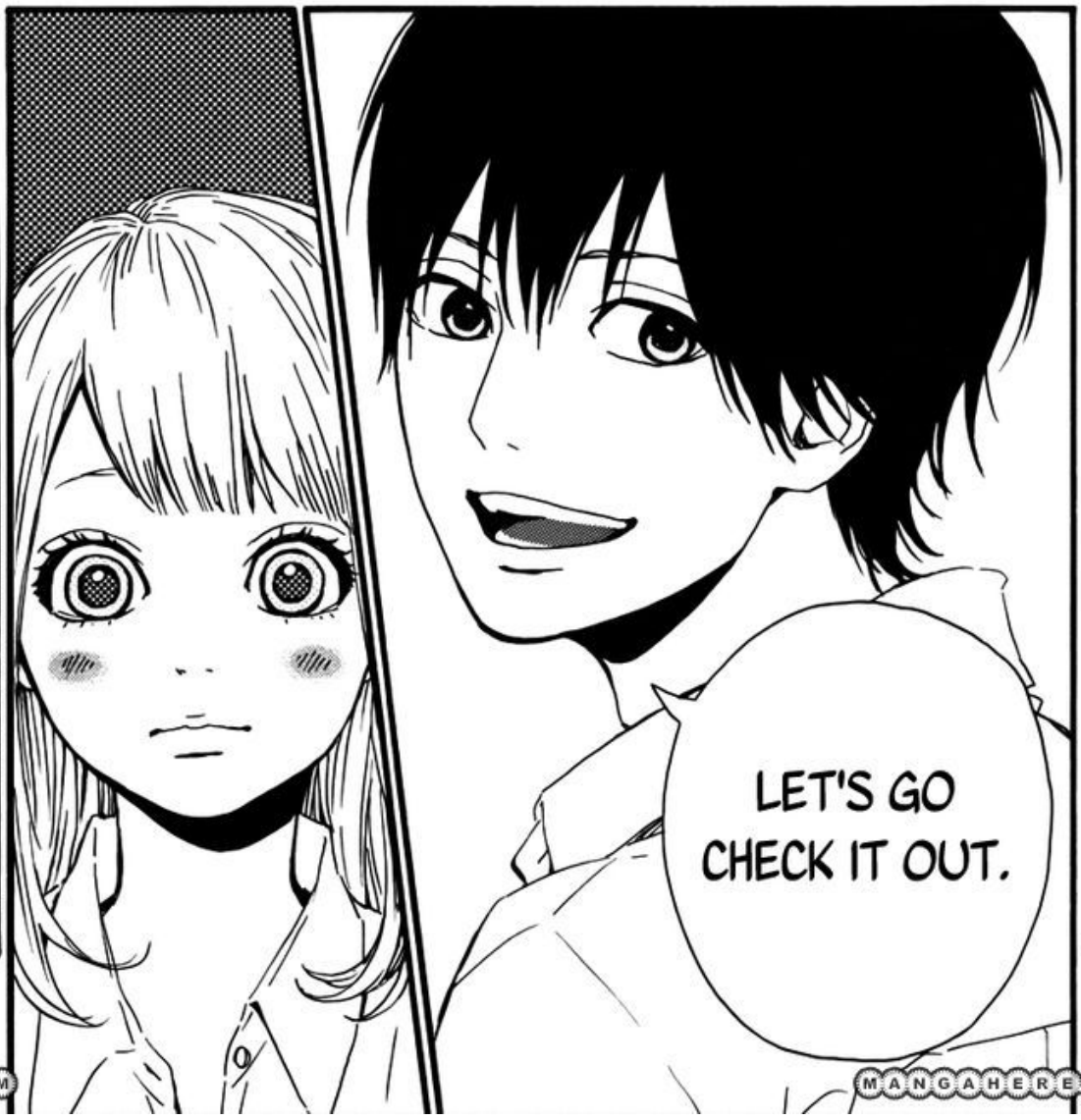

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WHOA!

AMAZING!

THAT'S AZUMINO CITY OVER THERE.

YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE WHOLE CITY?!

The mountains are awesome!

CA-CUMC

NAHO! CLOSE YOUR EYES.

IT'S SO COOL. IT FEELS GREAT.

THE ALPS PARK ALSO HAS A GREAT VIEW.

The Matsumoto view!

And it has lots of animals.

I WANNA GO!

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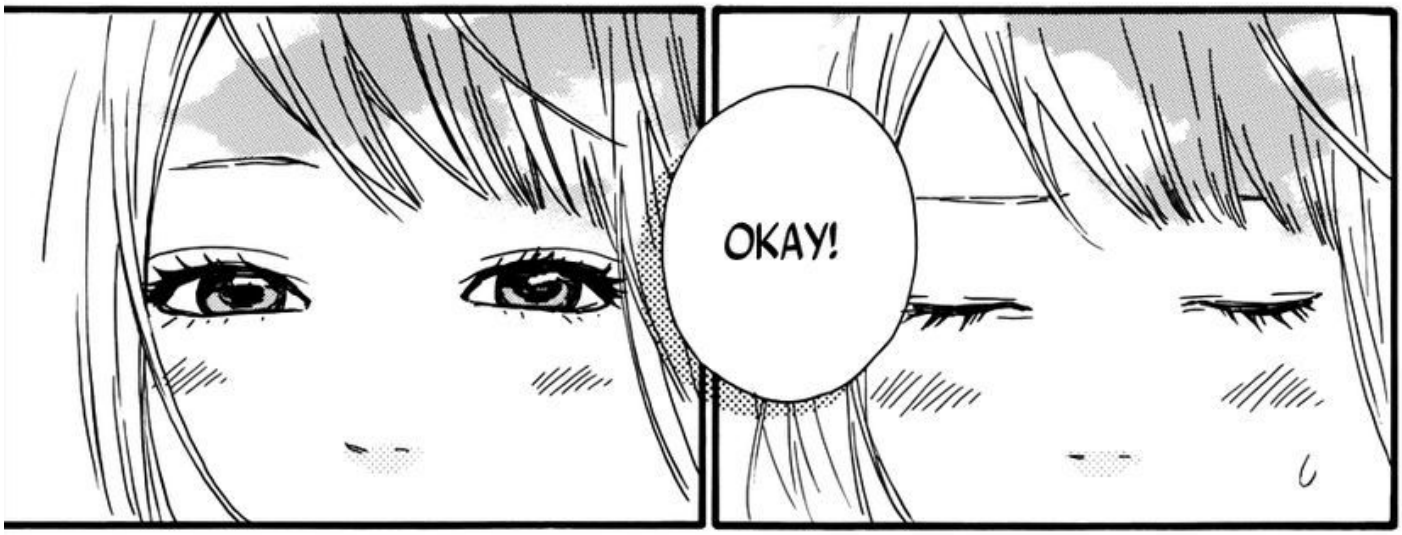

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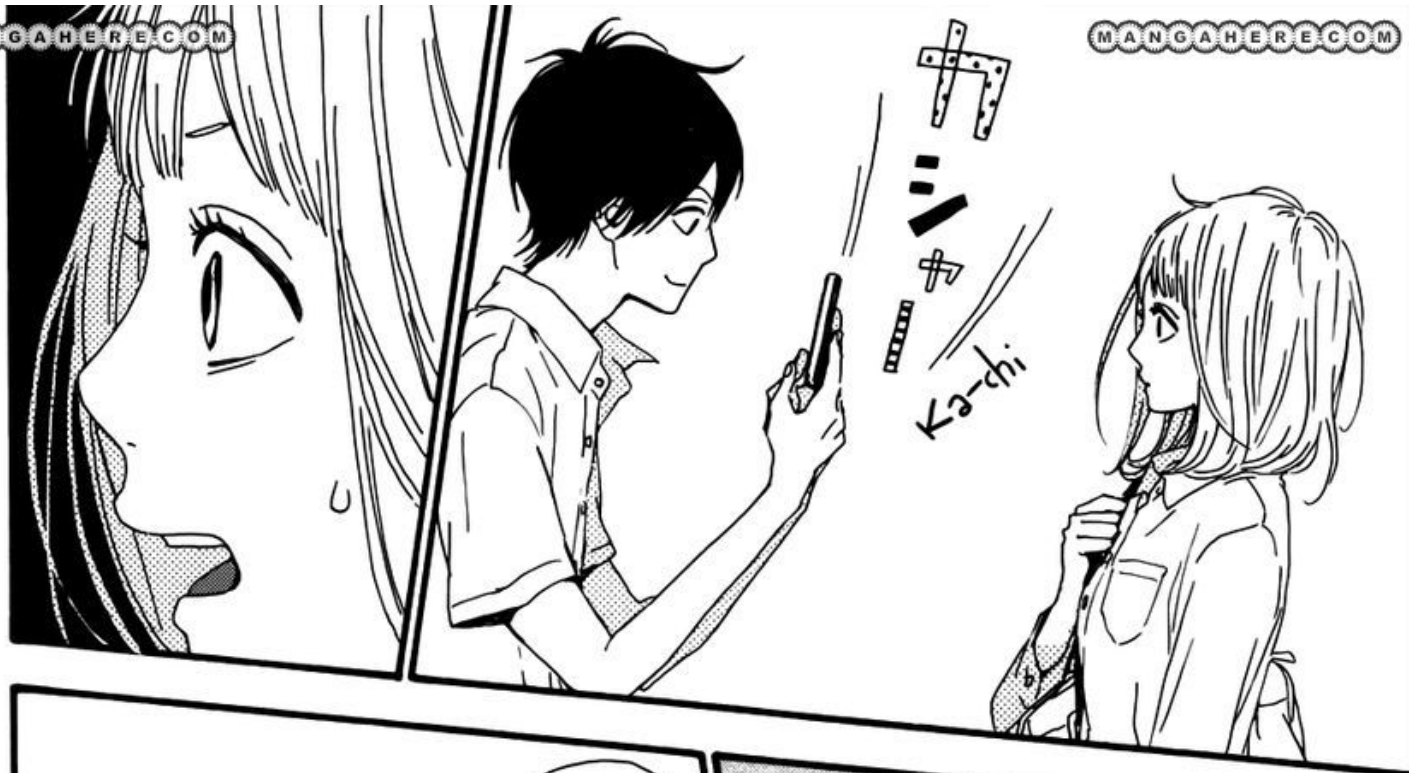

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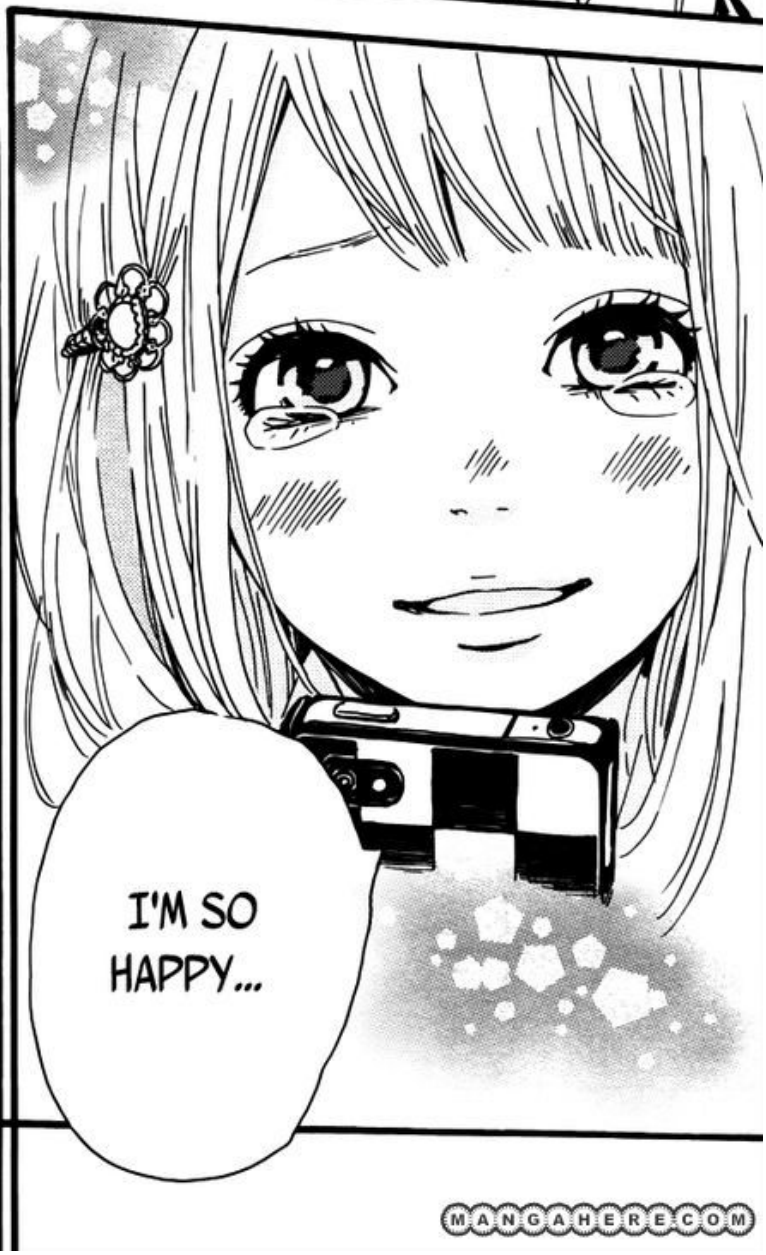

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THANK YOU, KAKERU.

EH- I THOUGHT IT WAS NORMAL FOR YOU.

You're from Tokyo.

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I DID THAT!

Being from Tokyo doesn't matter!

FU— THAT WAS A LITTLE EMBARRASSING.

I WAS NERVOUS!

I was so surprised

I cried.

Kakeru is so nice...

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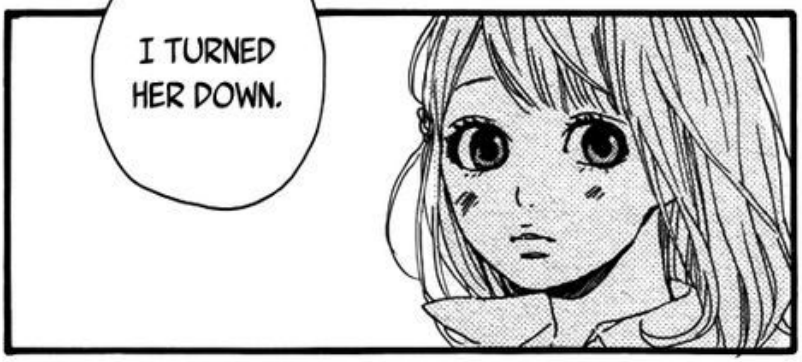

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WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!
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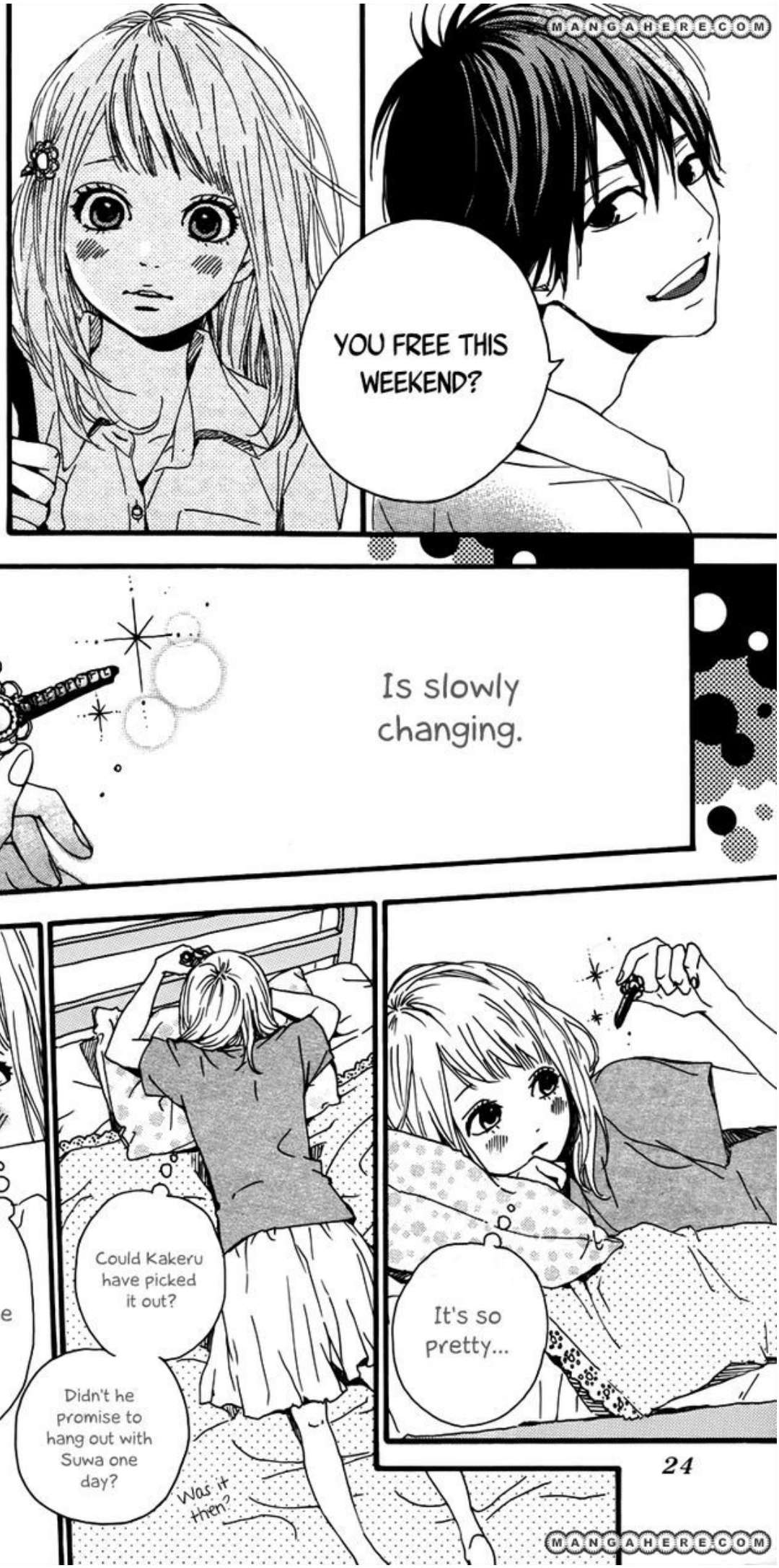

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• After dating Ueda for a month, it looks like they'll break up.

◎ Be careful, he invites you to study, but you still do badly on the test.

Today as well is all thanks to the letter...

The letter said they were together for a month.

Could she have gotten a present from Kakeru too...?

Thank you, me in the future for sending me that letter.

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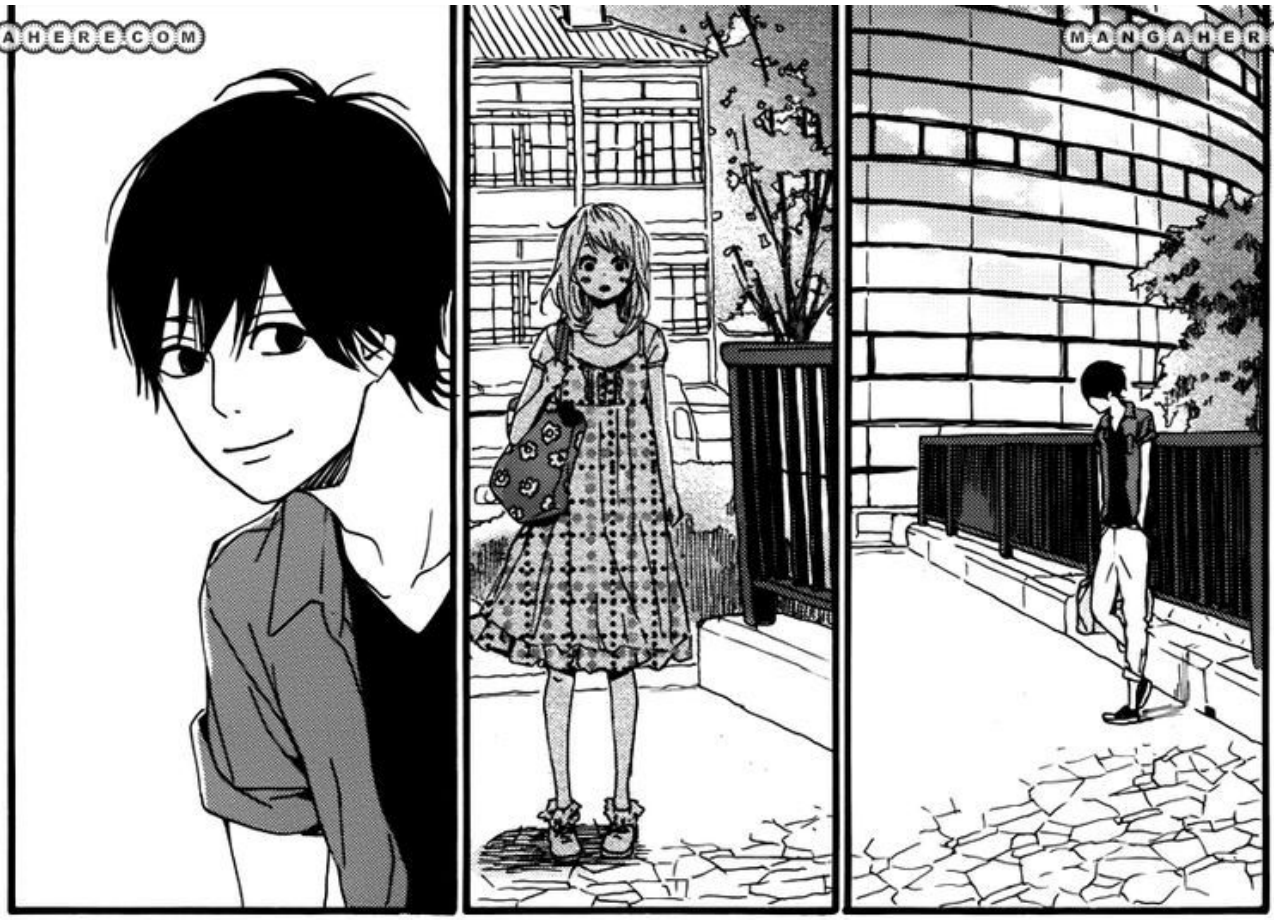

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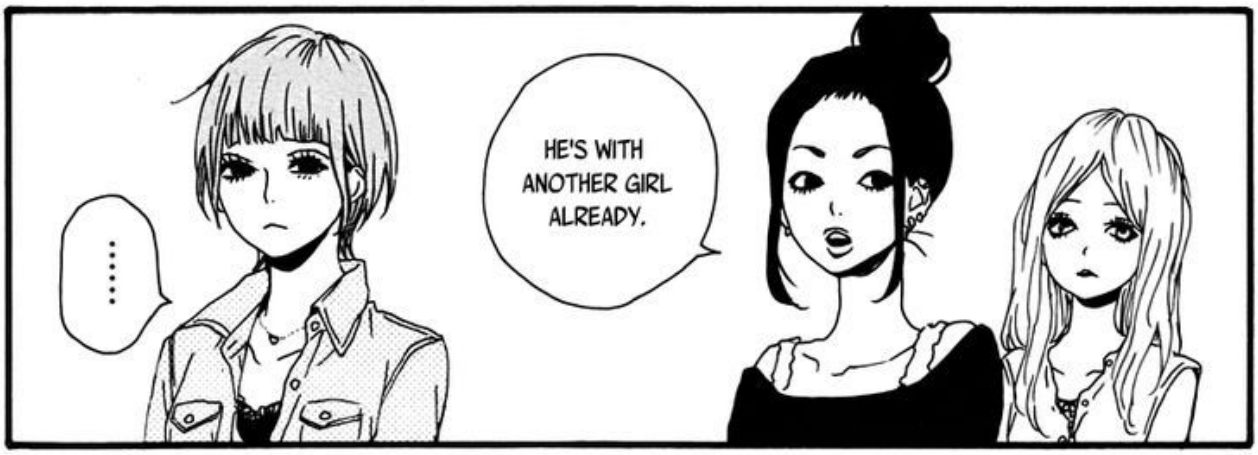

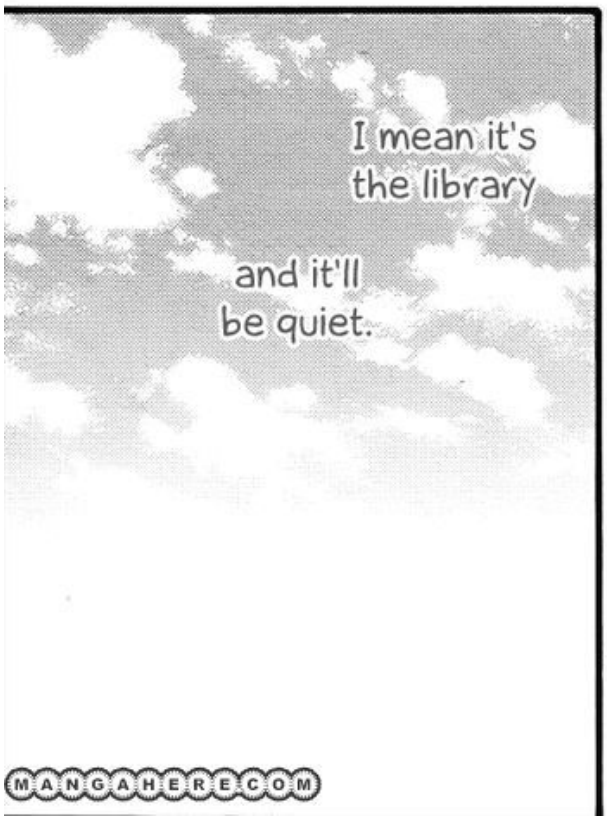

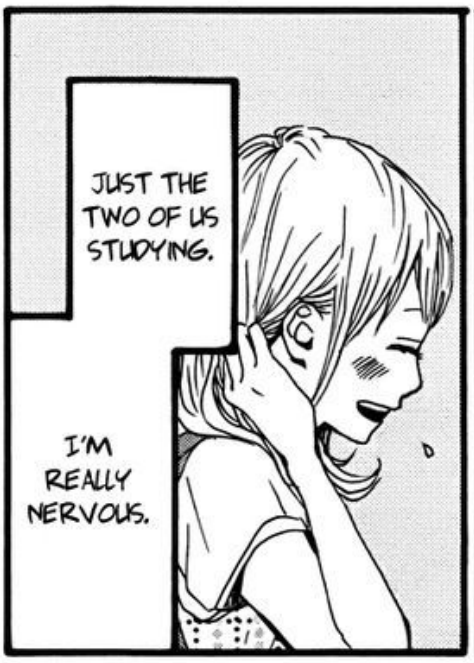

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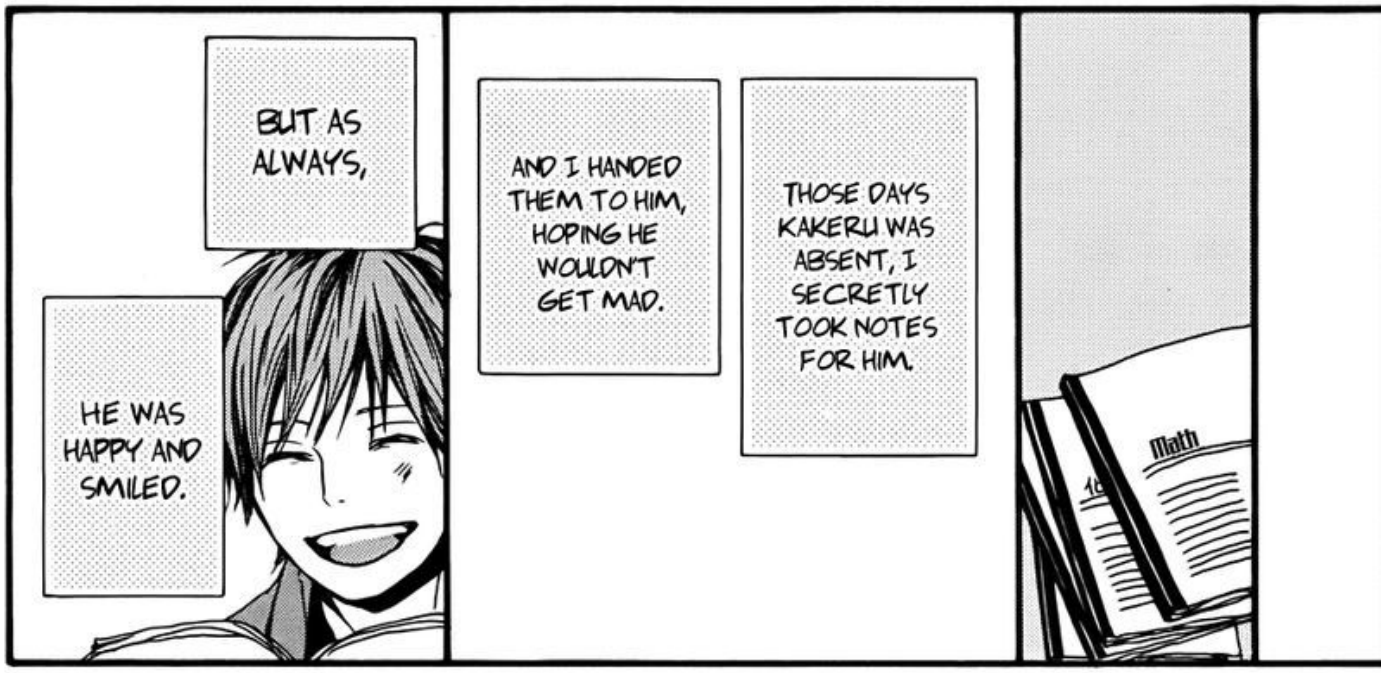

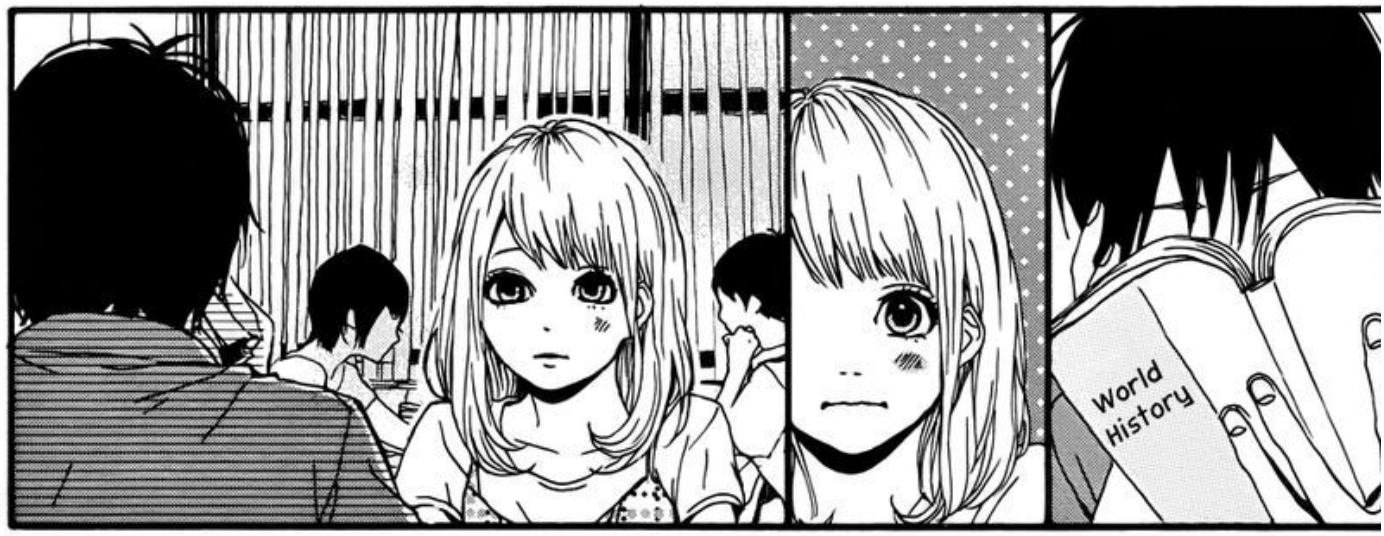

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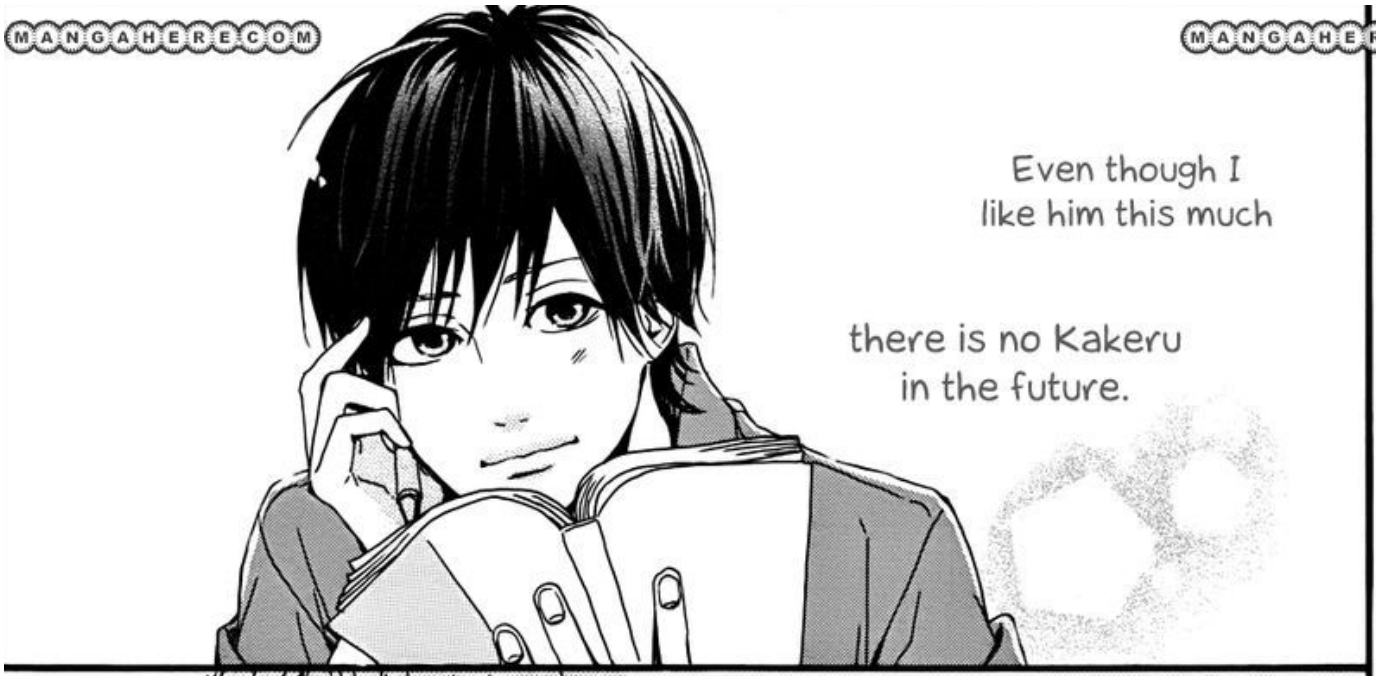

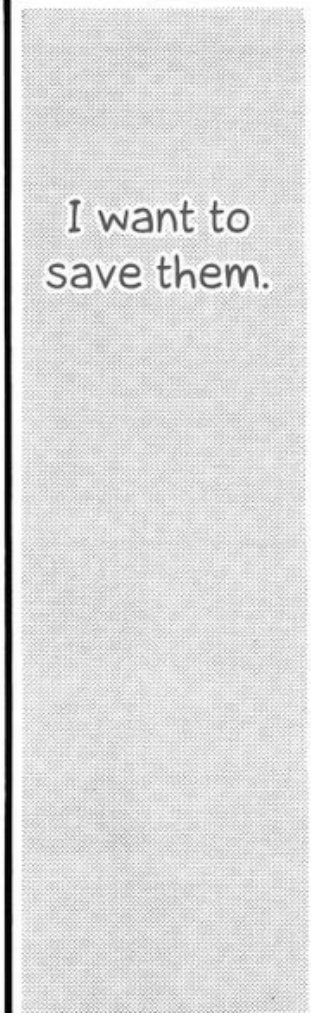

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『 July 4th 』

• We got our tests back in Chemistry and Kakeru got the highest score in our grade. (I failed this one...)

IT WAS ALL THANKS TO NAHO!

WHAT CRAM SCHOOL DID YOU GO TO?!

AND YOU WERE EVEN ABSENT!

ONLY IN CHEMISTRY.

WHOA!! YOU'RE #1?!

This is awesome!

IT WASN'T A CRAM SCHOOL.

THANK YOU FOR TEACHING ME!

Even I got a higher score...I'll take it.

Takamiya Naho 92

WHY DO YOU GUYS LOOK SO HAPPY? YOU BOTH FAILED.

SMILE SMILE

53

24

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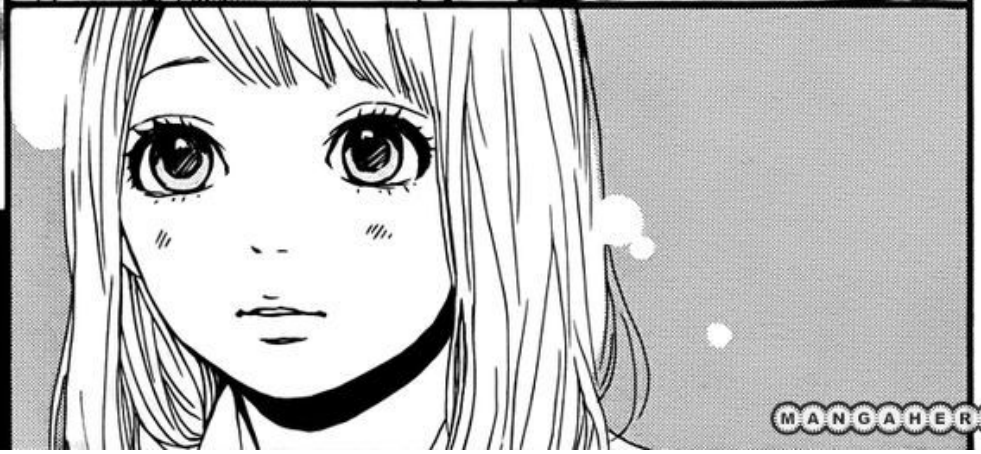
After we got out tests back, we still had time left in class, so Mr. Nakano talked to us.

It was really interesting and I still remember it.

It was about 'Time Slips'.



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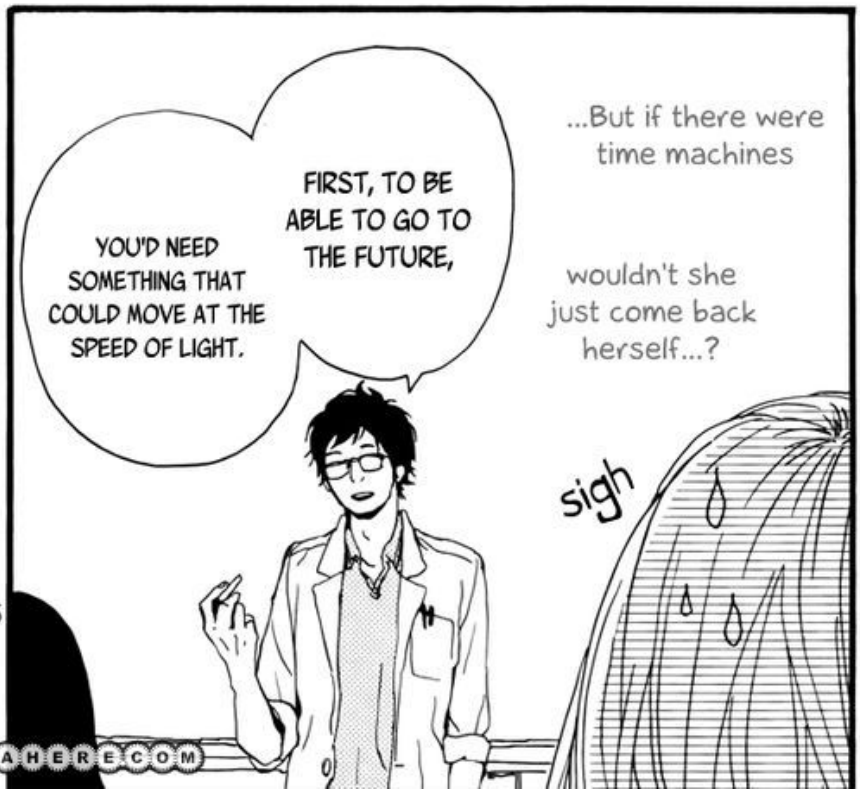
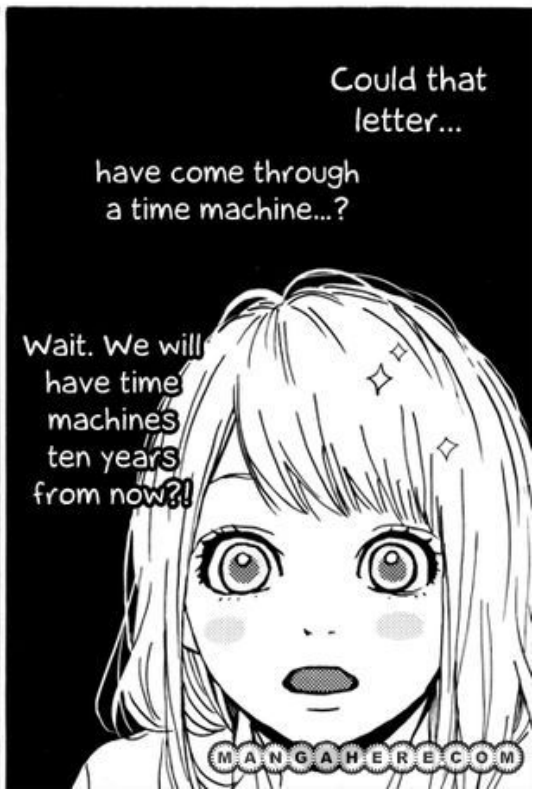
"IF ONLY I COULD USE A TIME MACHINE AND GO GET THE ANSWERS."

BEFORE THIS TEST, I BET YOU ALL WERE THINKING

"WHAT IF I ALREADY KNEW THE QUESTIONS ON THE TEST?"





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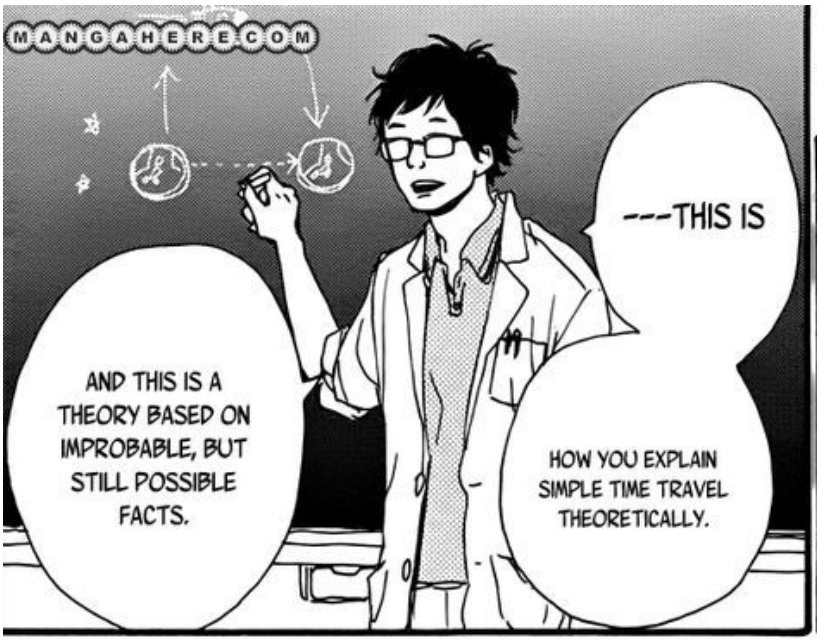
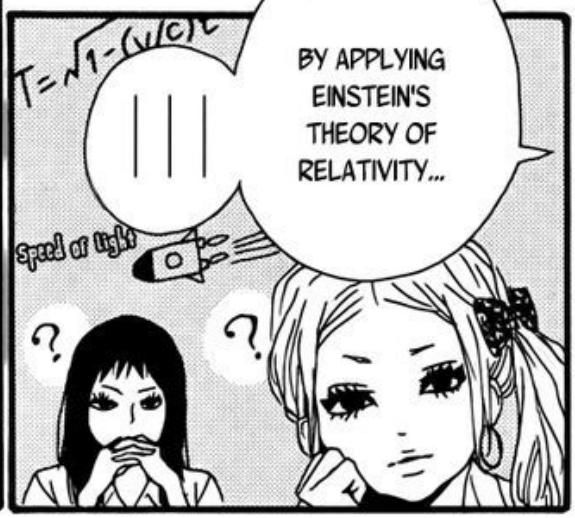
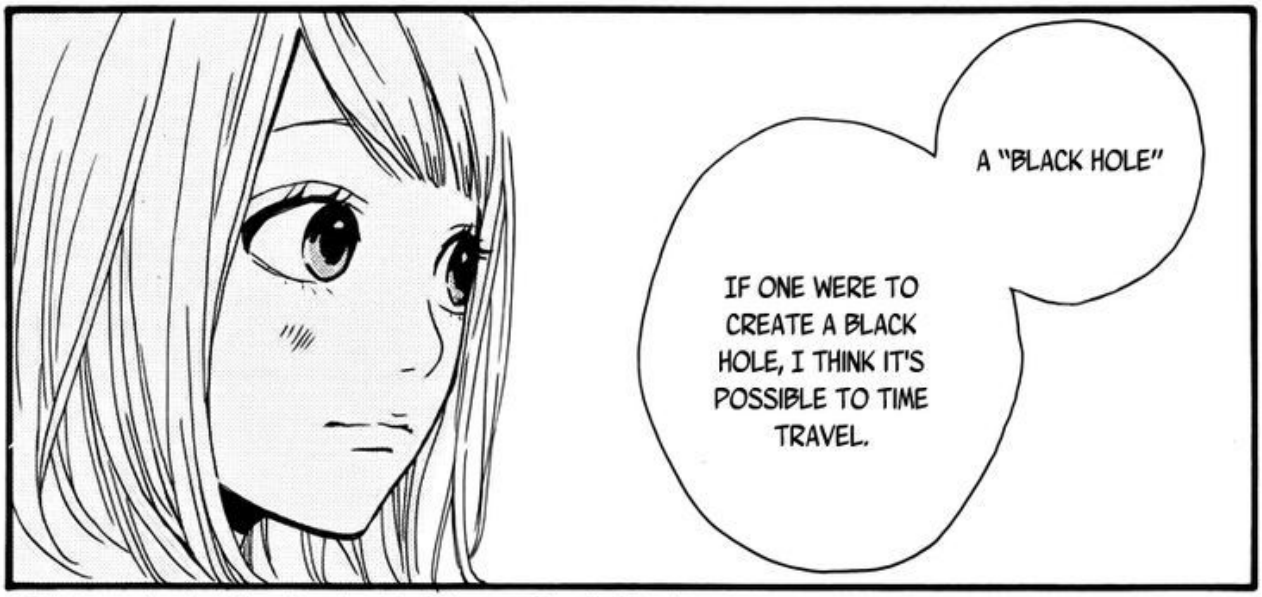
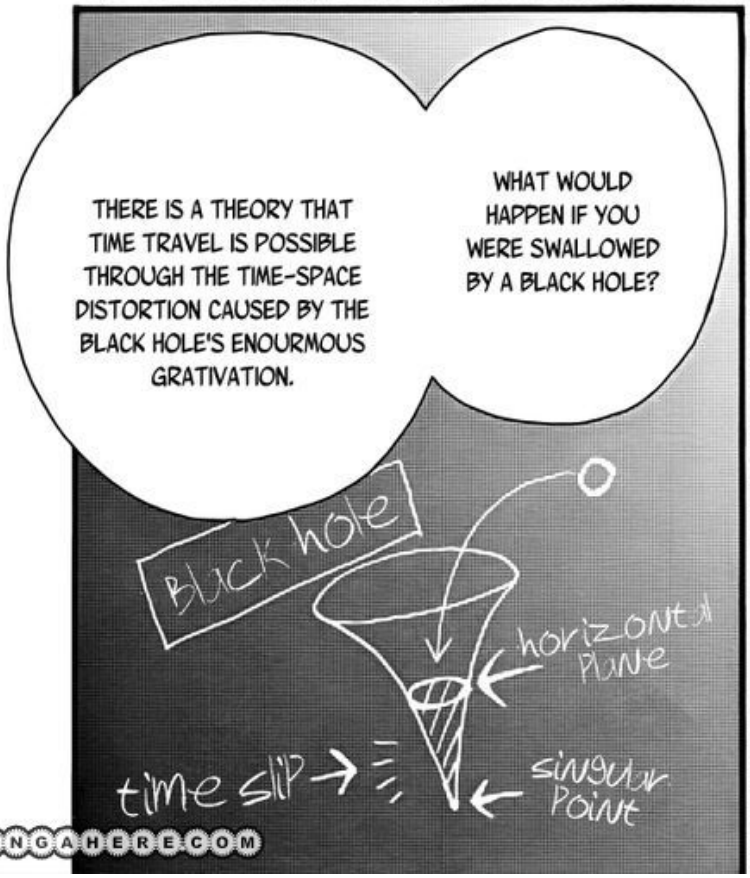
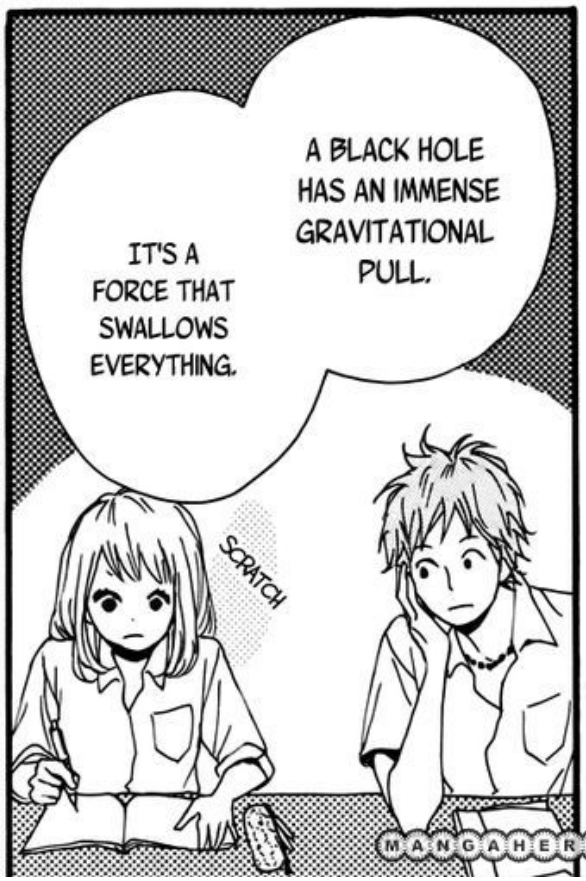






*TL/N - I am not a scientist, so I hope I explained this correctly or that it makes sense.





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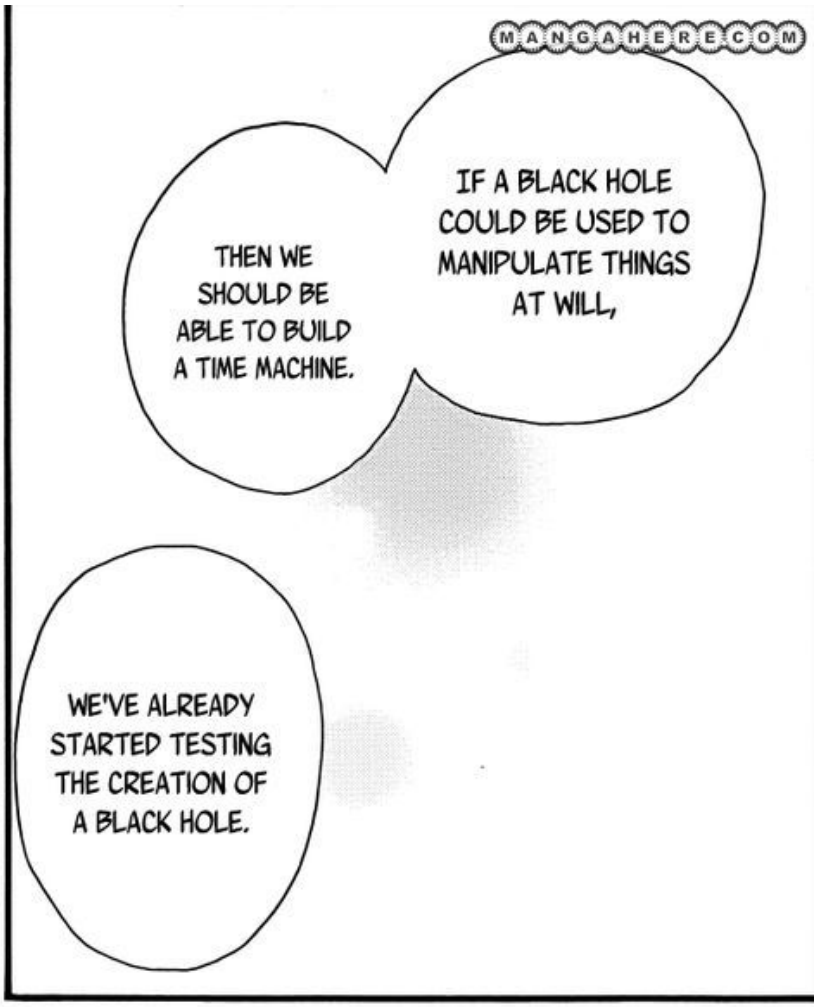

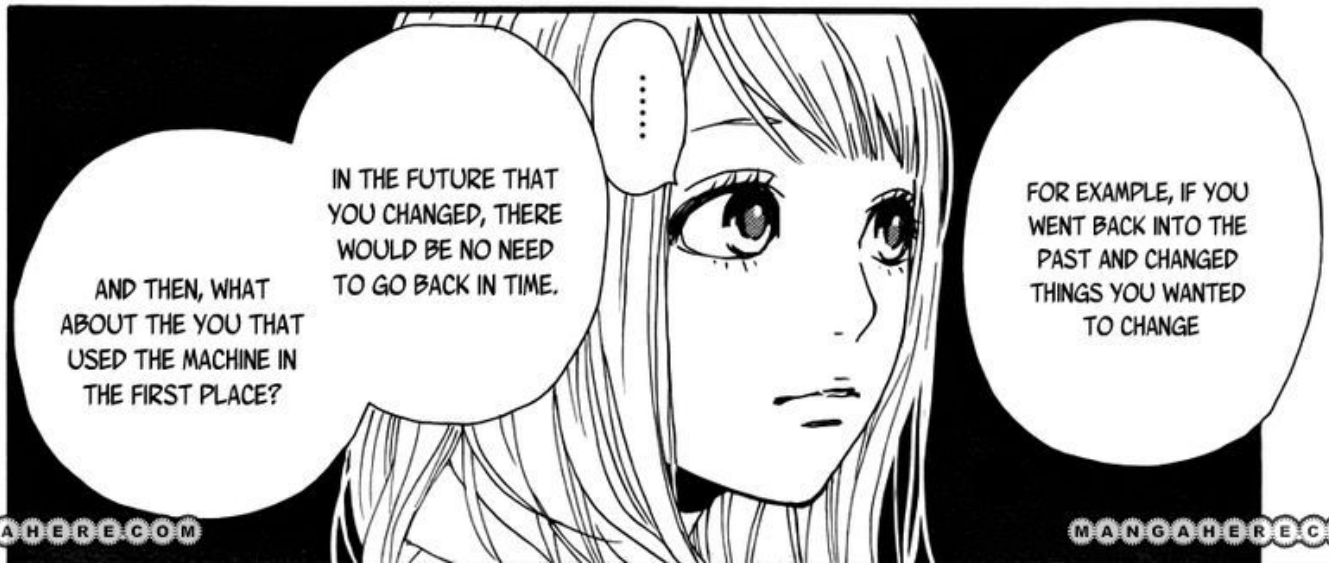

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THAT IS WHAT WE CALL A "TIME PARADOX".

WELL...

SO I THINK TIME TRAVEL IS IMPOSSIBLE.

THEN THERE ARE LIMITS TO THE AMOUNT OF INCONSISTENCIES

Shut up.

Well, look at you.

BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO NOT CREATE A "PARADOX", OR INCONSISTENCIES.

THERE ARE MANY SCHOLARS WHO USE THAT THEORY TO NEGATE TIME TRAVEL

CAN CREATE NUMEROUS CRUTCHES OF THE PAST AND FUTURE.

BUT A PARALLEL WORLD

THE INCONSISTENCY LIES WITH THE IDEA THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE PAST AND ONE FUTURE.

AND THAT'S A "PARALLEL WORLD."

Future Future Future

Present Present Present

Past

Parallel World

Future

Present

Past

One Way World

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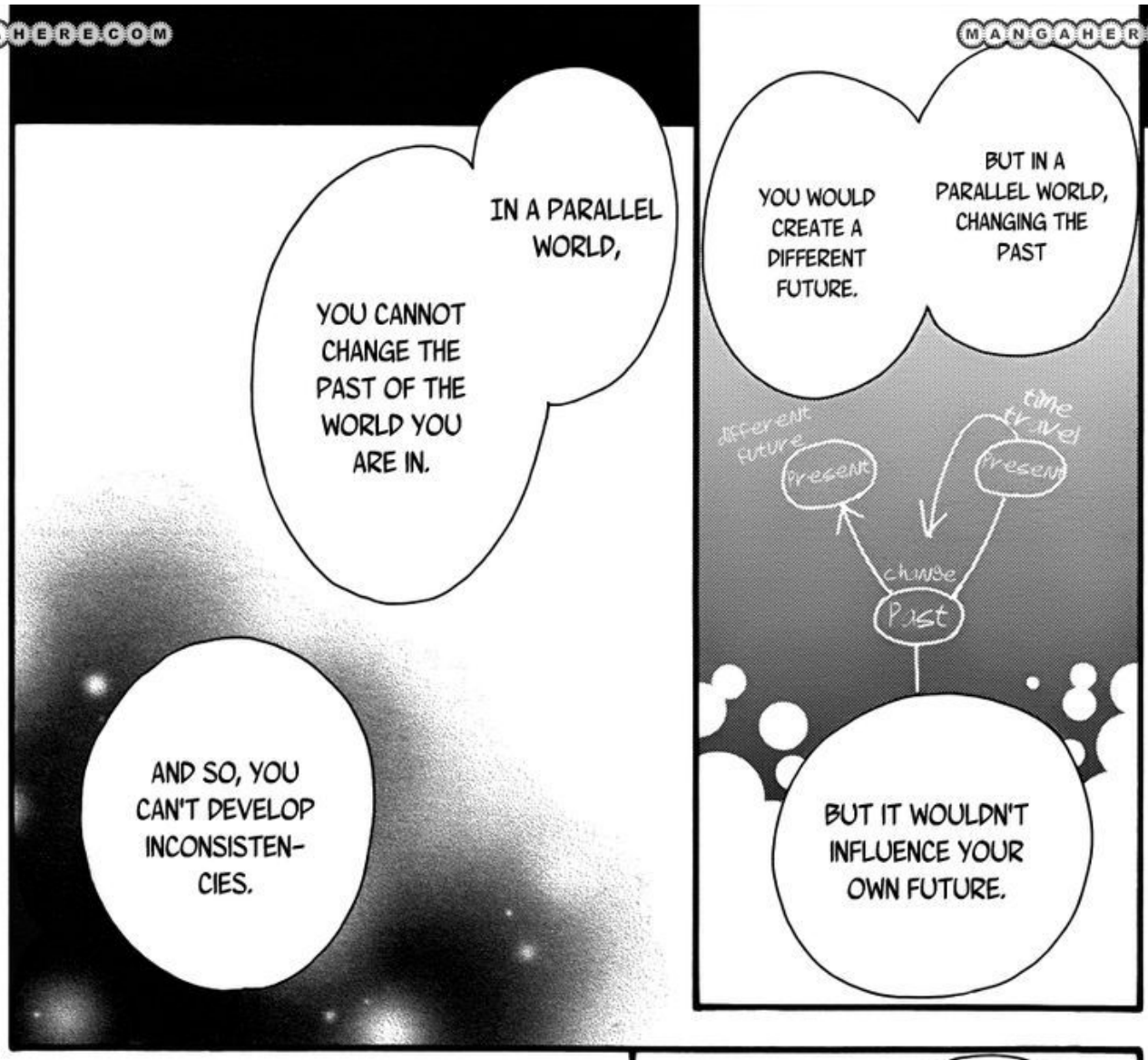

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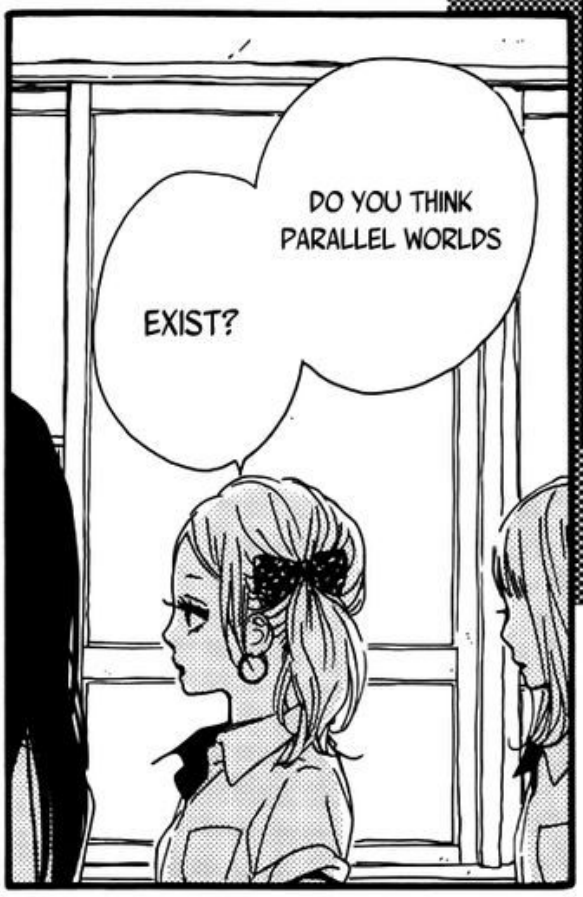

BUT IF THEY DO,

THAT MEANS YOU COULDN'T GO AND CORRECT A MISTAKE IN THE PAST WITH A TIME MACHINE.

AND THAT'S SAD...

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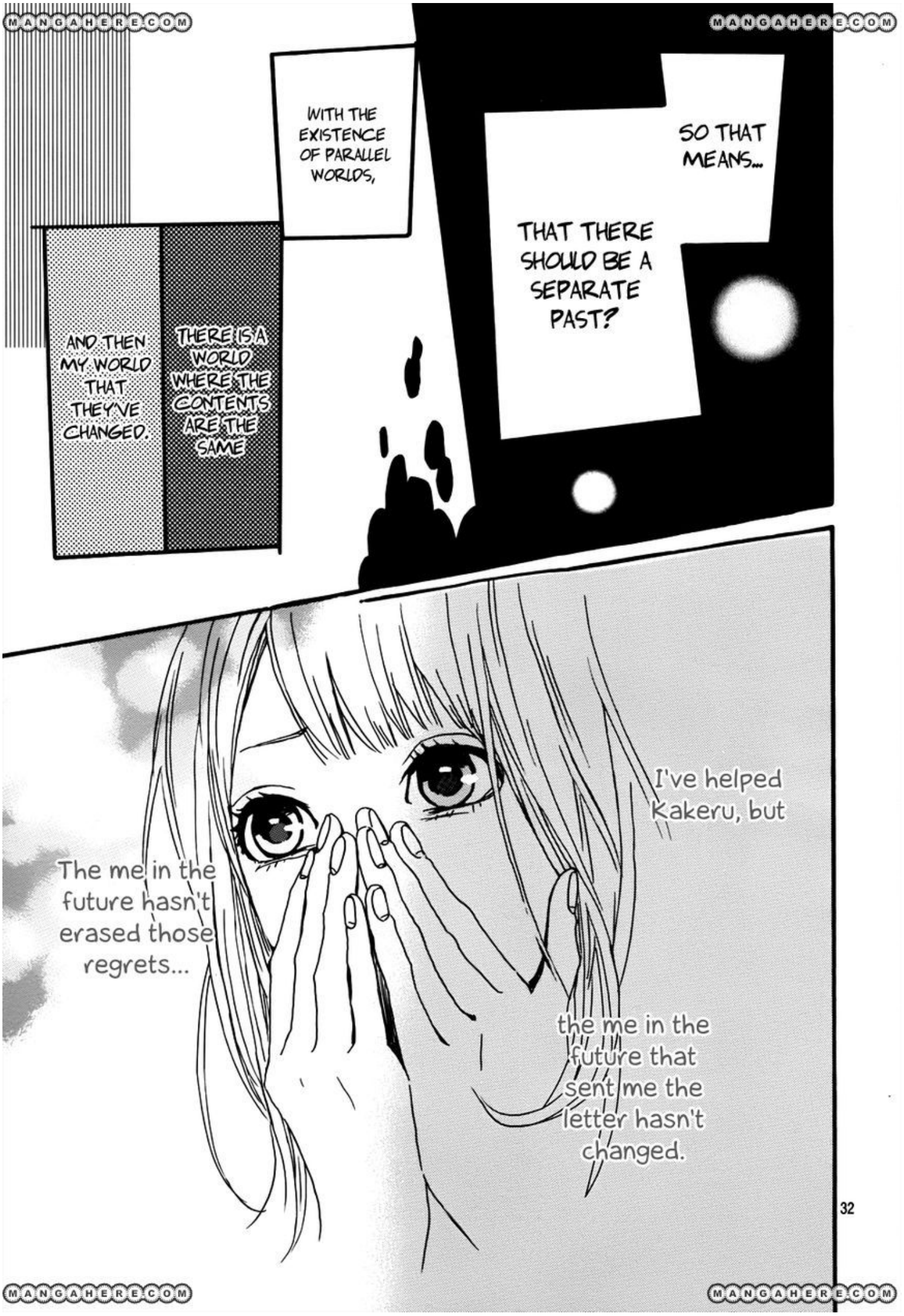

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AT THE SPORTS TOURNAMENT,

I WANTED KAKERU TO PLAY SOCCER.

I WISH I HAD MADE HIM LUNCH.

IF I HAD TOLD HIM NOT TO DATE UEDA...

THERE IS JUST TOO MUCH I REGRETTED.

I WANTED...

TO GIVE HIM SO MUCH MORE HAPPINESS...

...YEAH

AND COULD CHANGE THE FUTURE...

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I never thought it would be the last one.

I wonder if he ever saw my reply...

Naho, I am so sorry.

I did something to offend you and I've never stopped thinking about it.

I did something wrong, and hurt you.

Recently, I've been getting impatient, feeling depressed and cannot control my own feelings.

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Thank you.

This is sudden,

If I asked you who you gave Valentine's chocolate to I don't think you would answer me.

Besides that

I'm really sorry.

That's it.

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AND THEN SHE WENT BACK TO THE MATH ROOM. SO WE'LL EAT TOGETHER.

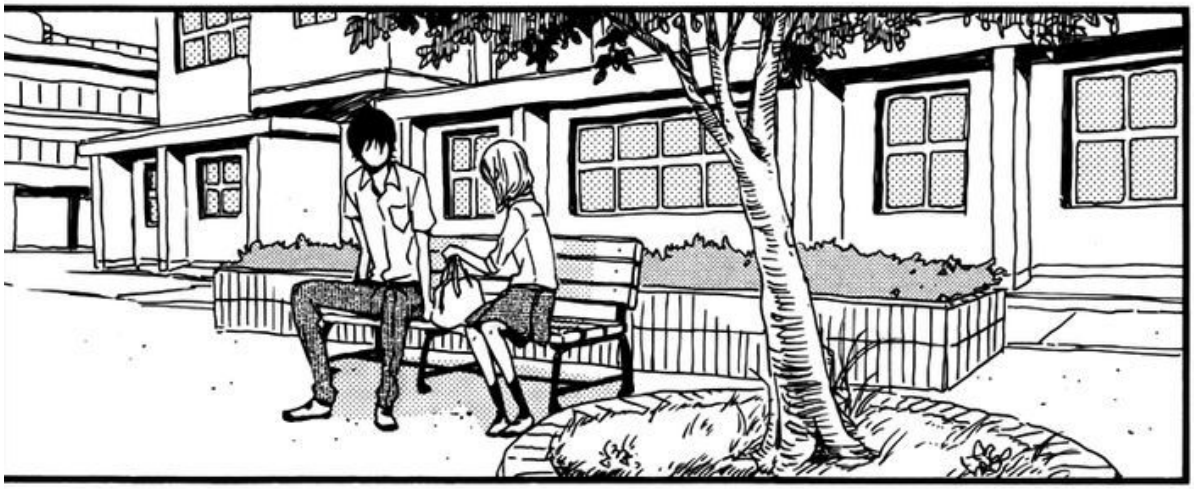
Right right.

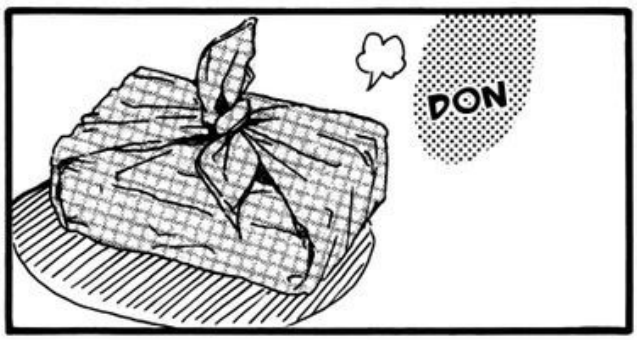
I ASKED AZU TO BRING YOUR LUNCH

It's fine??

IT'S FINE. IT'S FINE.

WHERE IS EVERYONE?





I'LL MAKE YOUR LUNCH FROM HERE ON OUT IF YOU'D LIKE.

THANK YOU!!

SERIOUSLY?!

I wondered why your lunch bag was so heavy!

I WOULD, I WOULD! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

ACTUALLY...I BROUGHT YOUR SHARE AS WELL...

DO YOU WANT IT?

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- After Chemistry ended, we all walked to math and talked about the cultural festival.

  We told Kakeru about last year's festival.

- They shoot off fireworks every year and Kakeru said, "Let's go see them together".

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The cultural festival promise is gone now.

IF YOU COULD GO TO THE PAST OR THE FUTURE, WHICH WOULD YOU PICK?

.....

THE FUTURE...I GUESS?

LIKE, IF YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST,

THEN I'D LIKE TO KNOW THE FUTURE AND CHANGE THE PRESENT.

...I SEE.

I'D GO TO THE PAST.

...HOW COME?

...I WANT TO ERASE MY REGRETS.

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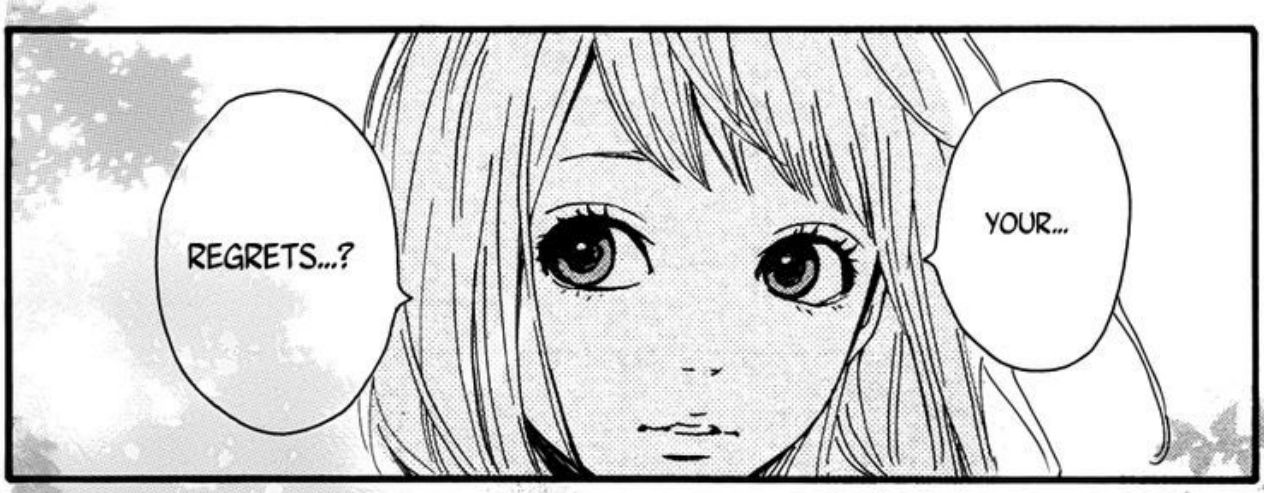

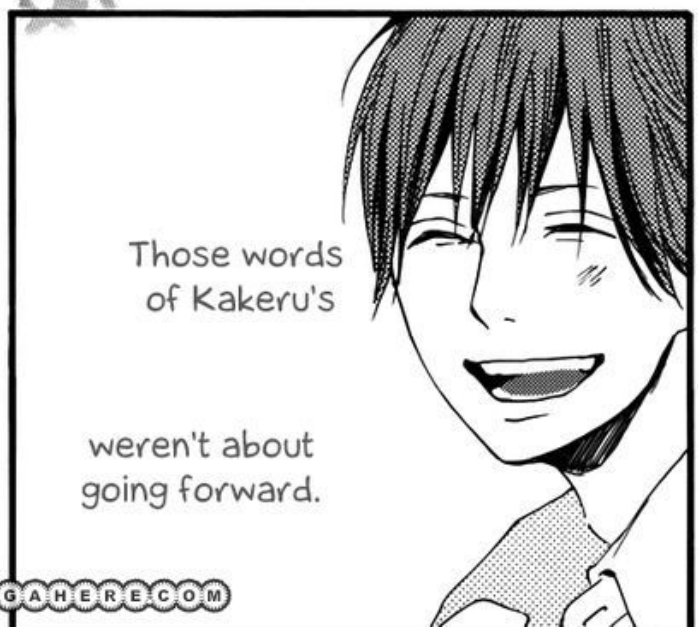

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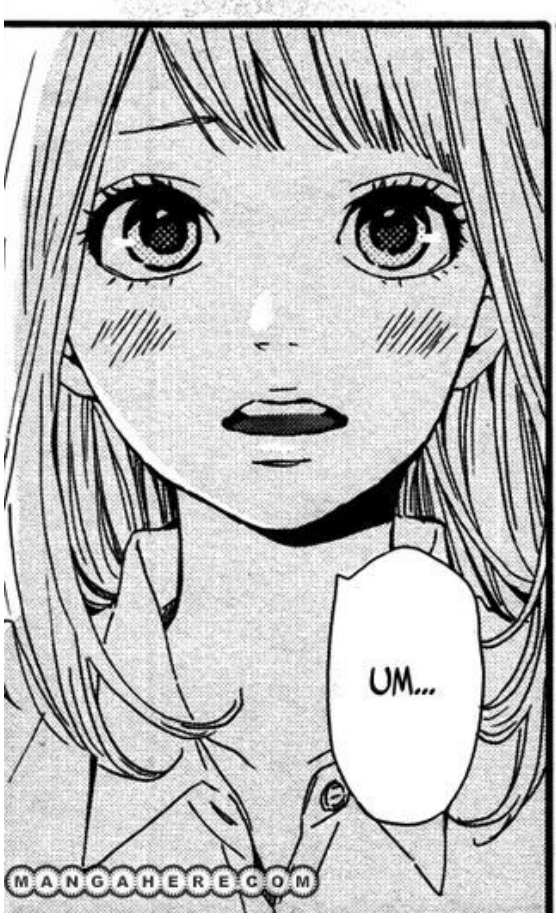
WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

• By changing the past, we might also be changing good memories (If that's so, I'm sorry.)

But, there is one thing in the past I don't want to change.

• That's my memories of the cultural festival fireworks.



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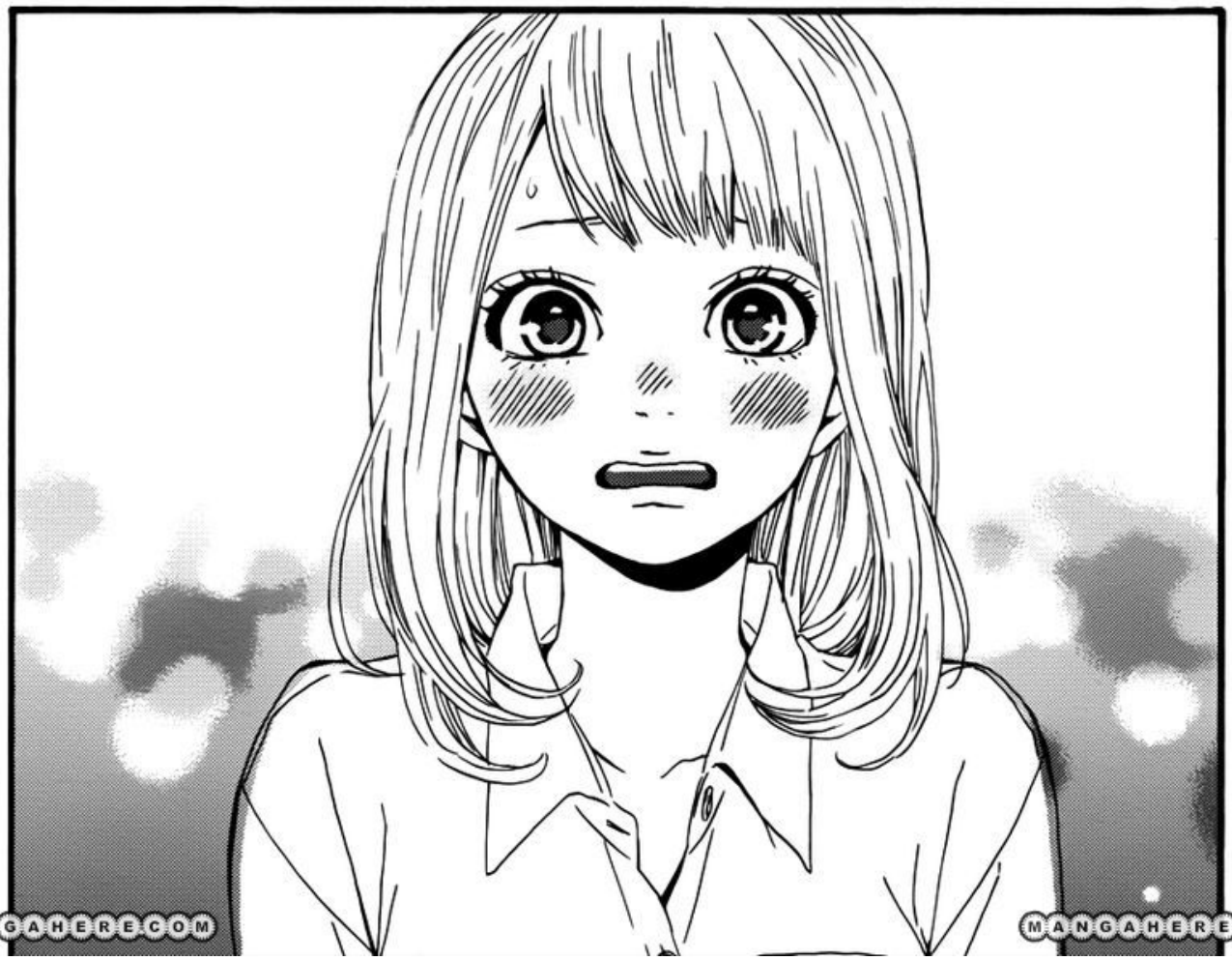
◎ Don't lose that memory.



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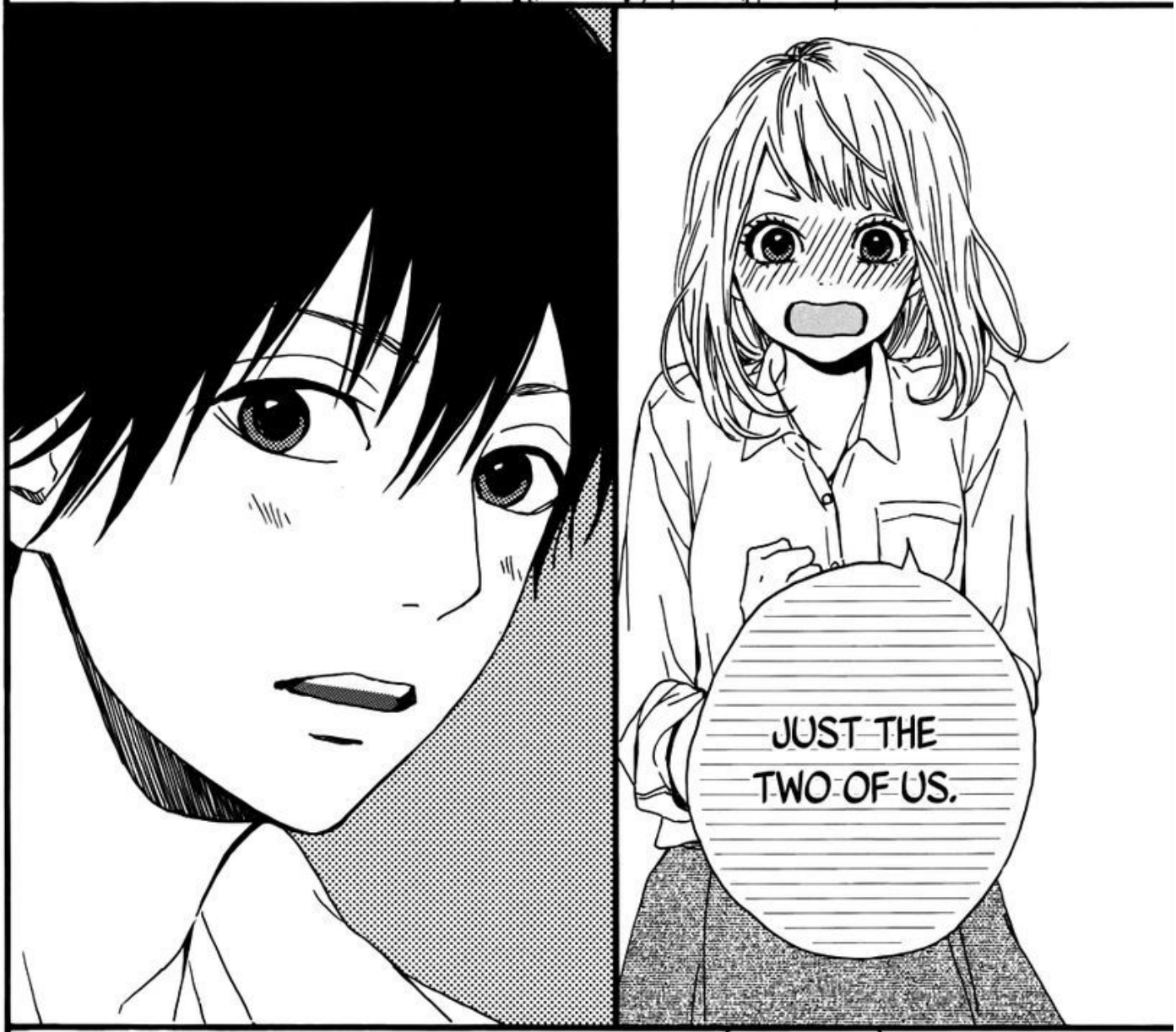

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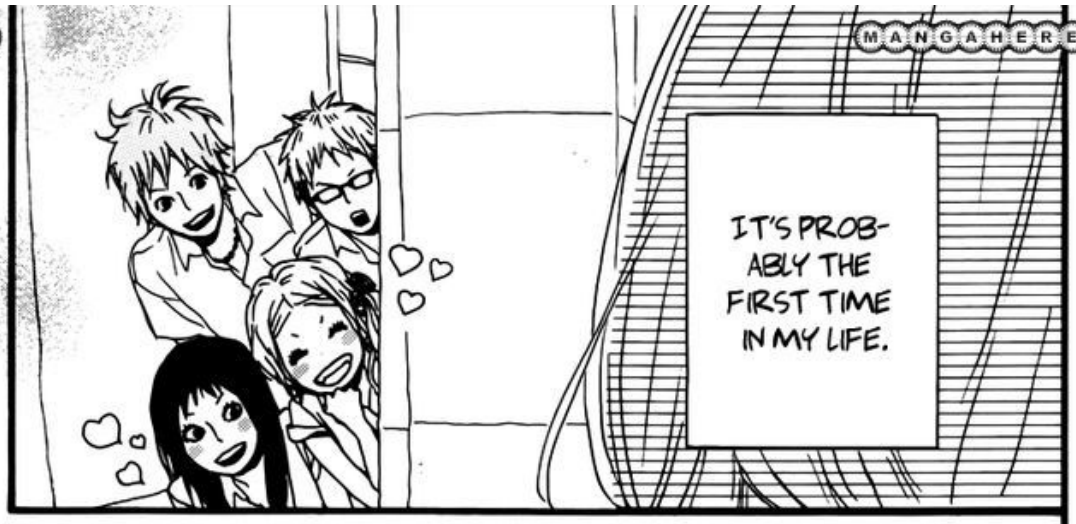

My hope for
Kakeru

In the future.

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WED. JULY 25TH
COMIC RELEASE

Spring of Junior year
Naho, received one letter.
The sender...was herself,
ten years in the future.
Written there was a list
of things she wanted her
to do. And slowly change
the present...

NAGANO PREFECTURE'S MATSUMOTO CITY.

orange

【オレンジ】

高野苺 no. 1

Ichigo takano

定価420円(税込)

THE SPRING I WAS 16.

THE MIRACLE THAT CONNECTED US.

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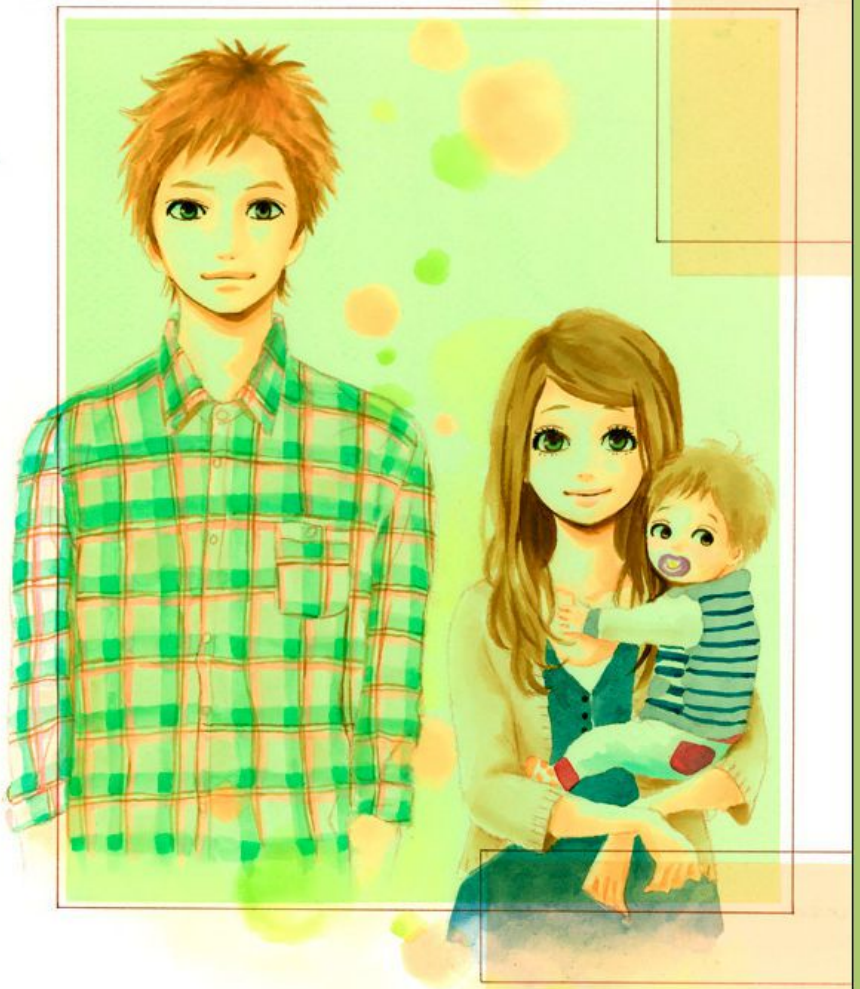
Chapter 5: Letter 5



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TRANSLATOR: DNJS
PROOFREADER: MINCHI
CLEANERS: MELA & MINCHI
TYPESETTER: MINCHI
QC-ER: MINCHI

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I always walked at a much faster pace,

but it was such a waste.

So I walked slowly on purpose.

THE DAYS YOU HAVE AND MY FUTURE.

orange

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

LETTER 6

The first volume of the manga has been released, and amount of attention is escalating, even more!

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Even if things change right now

the world that I exist in 10 years later

has not changed one bit.

The me who sent the letter 10 years later and

the me who exists in this world right now

may be two different people.

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orange STORY AND CHARACTERS

Story so far: One day a letter from her future self arrives for Naho. In the letter, "events that will occur" and "choose this path", and also, "during the winter when he was 17, Kakeru dies in an accident." are written down. In order to save Kakeru and not regret her actions, Naho decides to take action according to what's in the letter. However, recently the contents in the letter are rapidly starting to conflict with her world right now... This world and the future are "parallel worlds", on a different time axis, and no matter what she does, the world of the future Naho won't change? Naho becomes uneasy. However, in the letter, "Please don't change the memory of the cultural festival fireworks." is written down. In order to respond to that, Naho invites Kakeru to the fireworks herself.

Naruse Kakeru:
A transfer student who just arrived from Tokyo. It's his first time living in Nagano. He's skilled at soccer.

Takamiya Naho:
A second year high school student living in Matsumoto city, Nagano prefecture. She doesn't have confidence in herself and has trouble giving her opinion and saying what she wants.

Suwa Hiroto:
He's in the soccer club. He's the leader of the group.

Murasaka Azusa:
Her home is a bread shop. She's always happy and won't ever cry.

Hagita Saku:
He's very smart and always studying. He's not good at physical activity.

Chino Takako:
She's boyish and an ally of girls. She has a brus-

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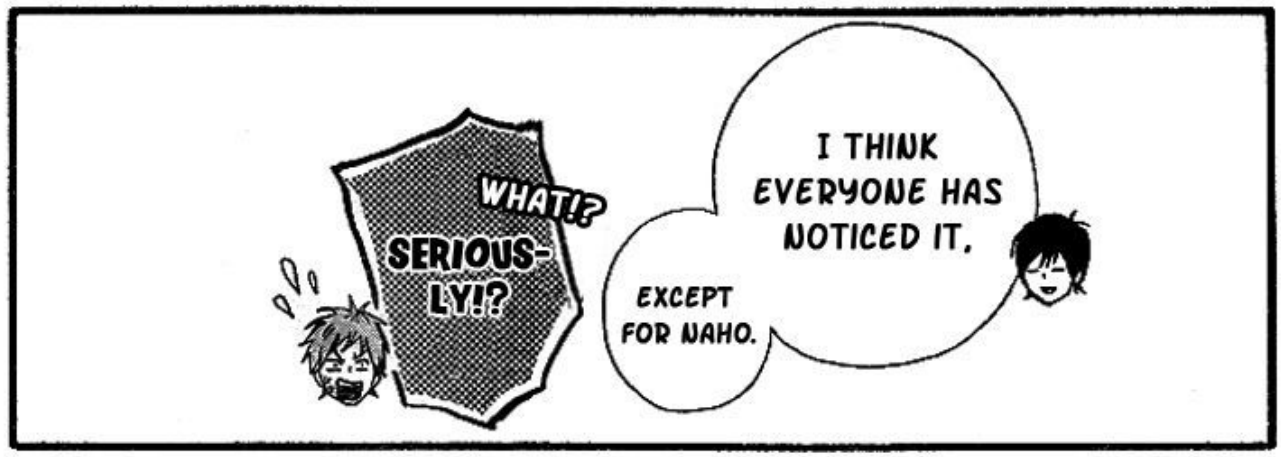

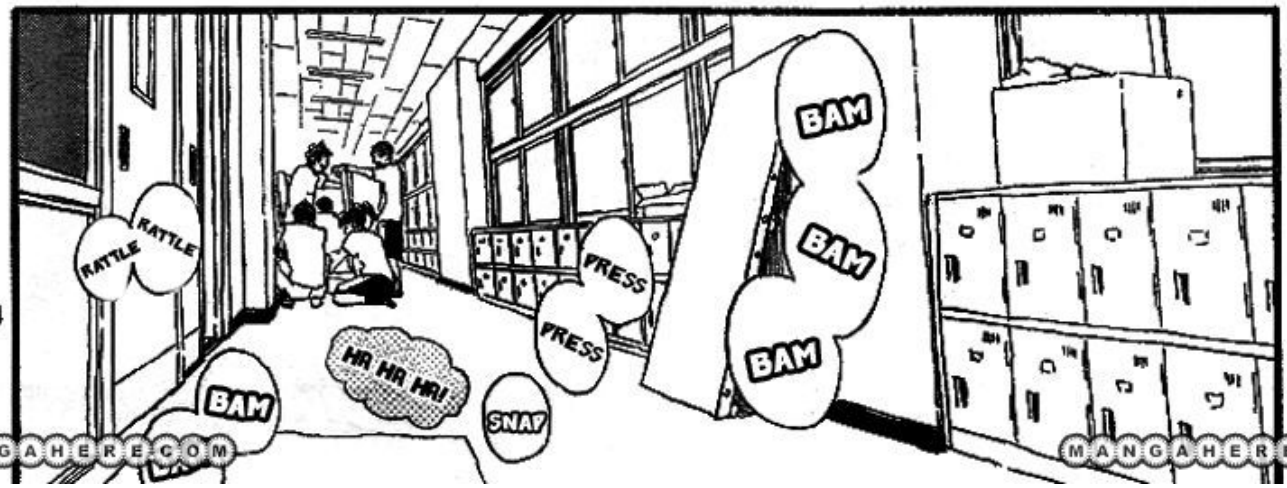

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I DIDN'T PLAY IT THOUGH.

GUITAR!?

WITH CLASS 2'S MARUYAMA AND HE WAS HOLDING A GUITAR.

KABOSU*

I remember... it was just karaoke.

HA HA HA

HAGITA DID A LIVE PERFORMANCE.

COME TO THINK OF IT, AT LAST YEAR'S FESTIVAL,

HUH!? HAGITA-KUN!?

HA HA HA

That's right.

*T/N: Citrus Fruit

I haven't been told that!

WHERE!

Say more!

KAKERU IS PRETTY HANDSOME, RIGHT!?

THEN, I'LL ENTER.

HUH... BUT HAGITA,

THAT'S WHAT I'M AIMING FOR.

YOU'LL BE THE LAST WITH ZERO VOTES.

IF YOU ENTER,

That's splendid.

HEY! KAKERU,

WHY DON'T YOU ENTER THE MR. CONTEST!?

HAH!?

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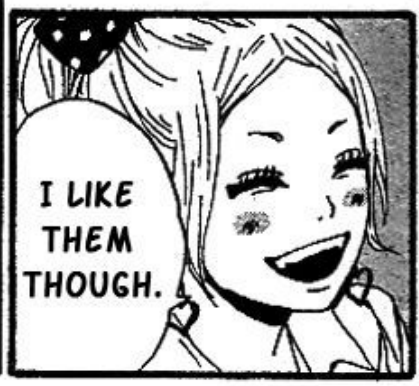

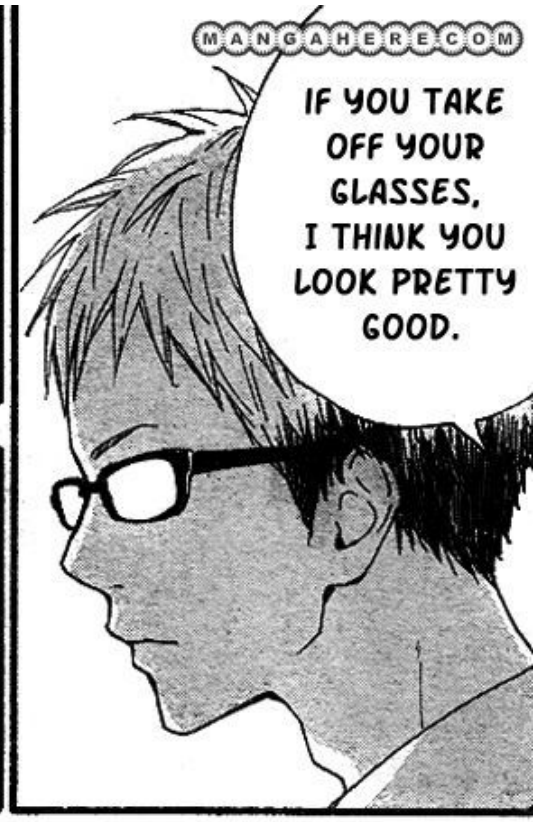

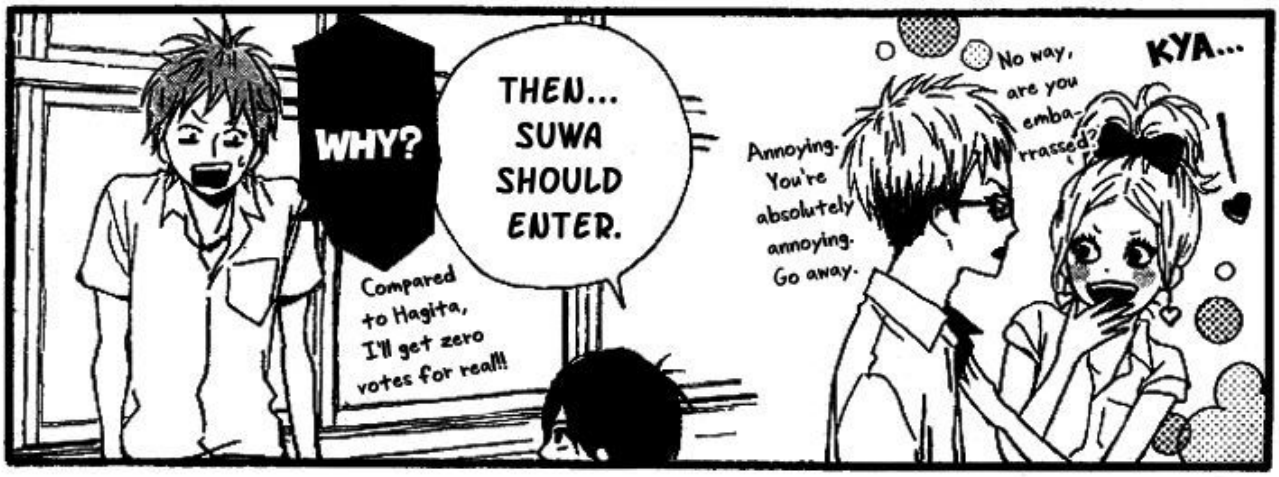

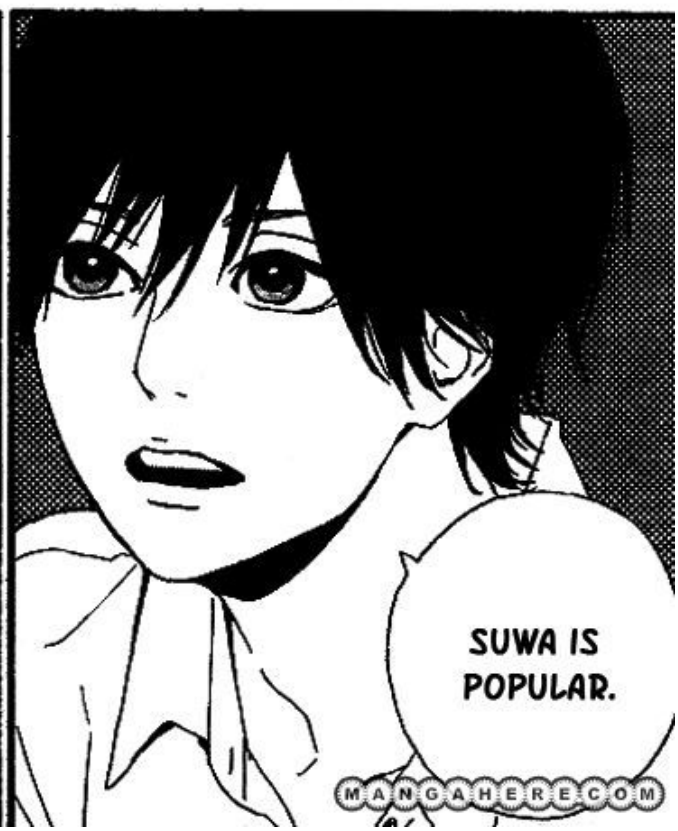

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ARE YOU SAYING GOOD THINGS?

AND!? WHO DID YOU CHOOSE!?

WOW!! I WONDER IF IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A GIANT WITH A HEALTHY APPETITE AND MUSCULAR!?

YEAH. MOREOVER, THREE OF THEM AT THE SAME TIME.

THREE OF THEM!? FROM THE SOCCER CLUB?

HUH!?

FOR SURE.

HMMM.

HUH!?

I TURNED THEM DOWN. ALL OF THEM.

I HAVE SOMEONE I LIKE.

YOU'RE NOT SURPRISED?

...WHAT'S WITH THAT REACTION?

I intended to keep it hidden.

SERIOUSLY, EVERYONE KNOWS, HUH?

WE KNOW.

... BECAUSE

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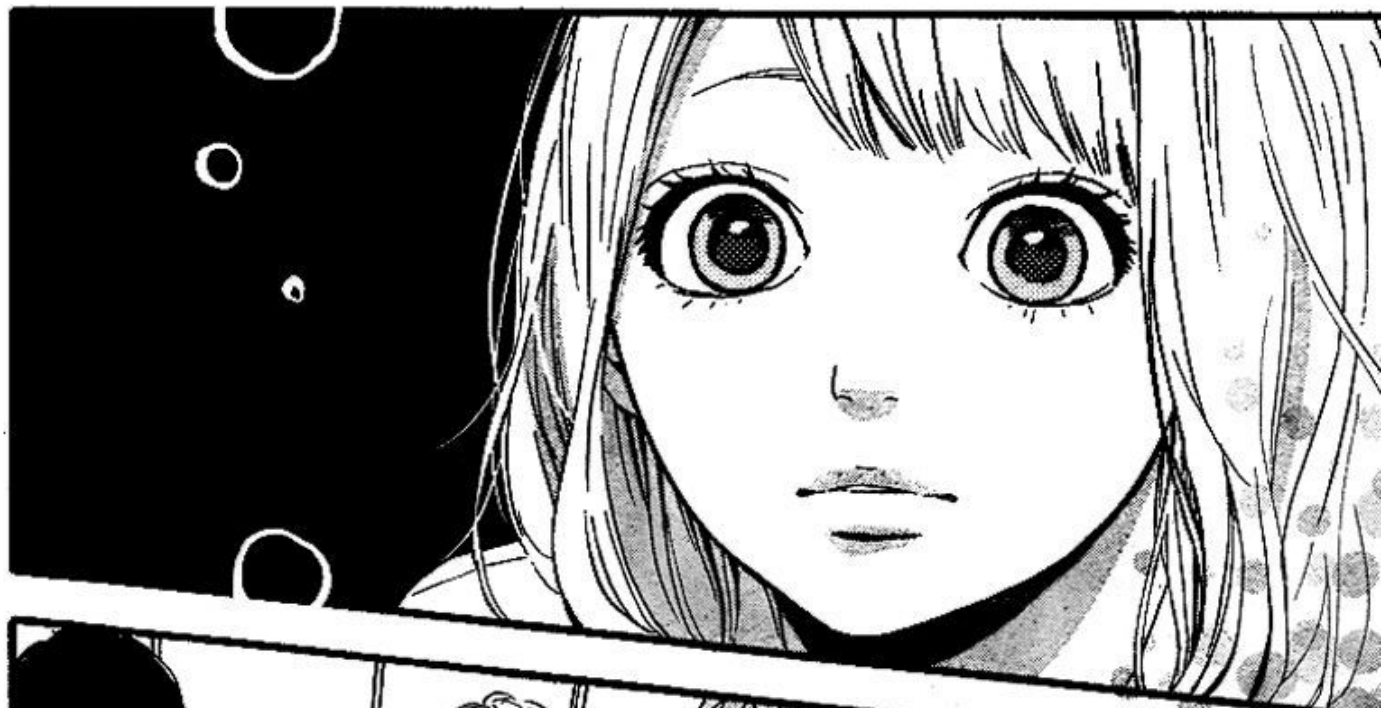

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I'M FINE.

IT'S OKAY.

THAT'S NOT MY INTENTION.

SO WE CAN'T HELP YOU OUT... SORRY.

WE'RE NAHO'S ALLIES.

NAHO AND KAKERU WITH ALL OUR MIGHT!

THEN, WE'RE GOING TO CHEER ON

YEAH.

IF SO, I'LL BE HAPPY.

IF NAHO AND KAKERU START GOING OUT, YOU'LL BE FINE WITH IT?

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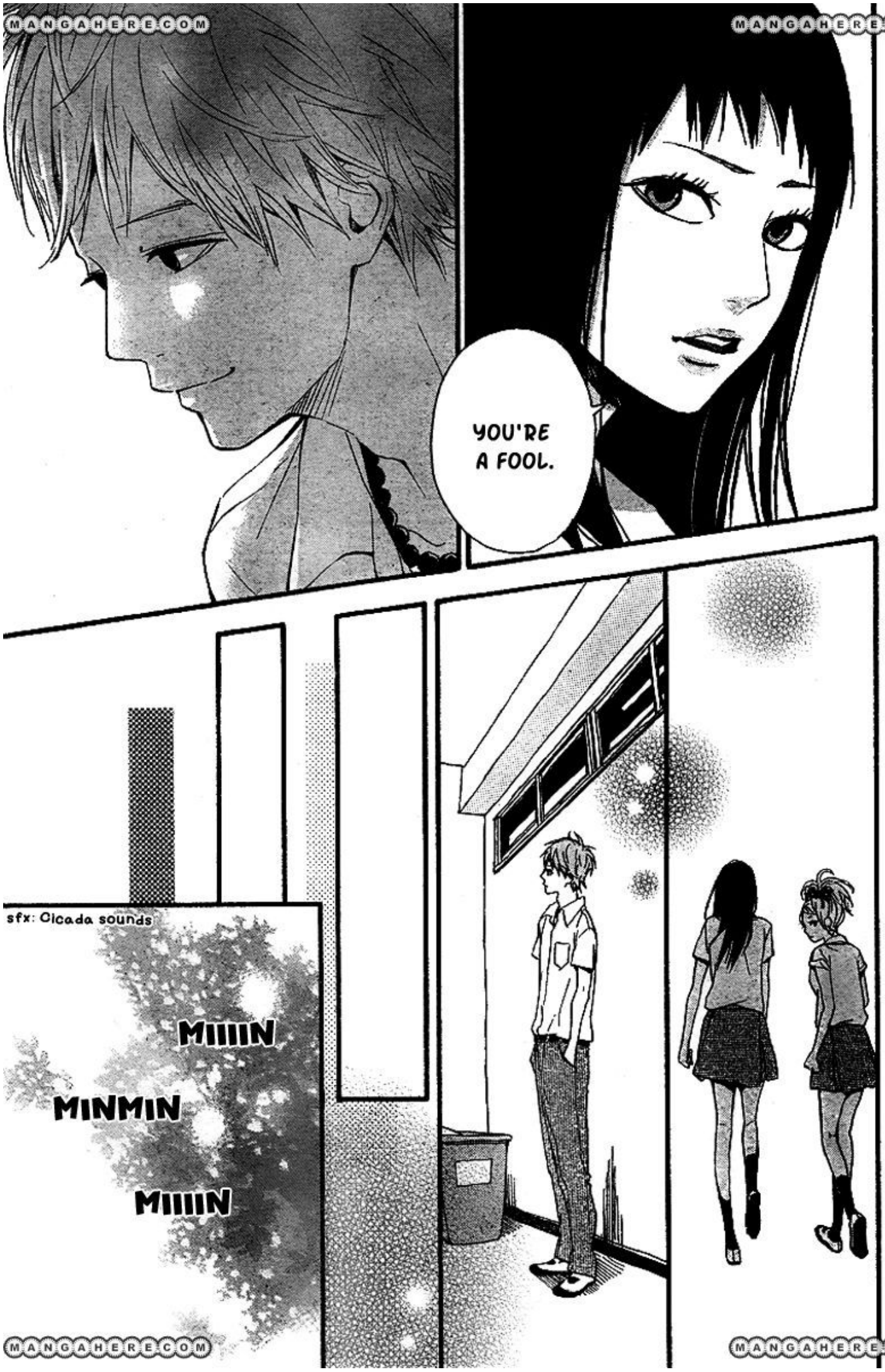

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July 13

- The first day of the "Azalea" cultural festival.
- Class 2-6 is doing a "Pool House"

- Azu and Taka-chan are wearing their matching floral print shorts.
- But I was embarrassed so I didn't wear them (the length was too short...).

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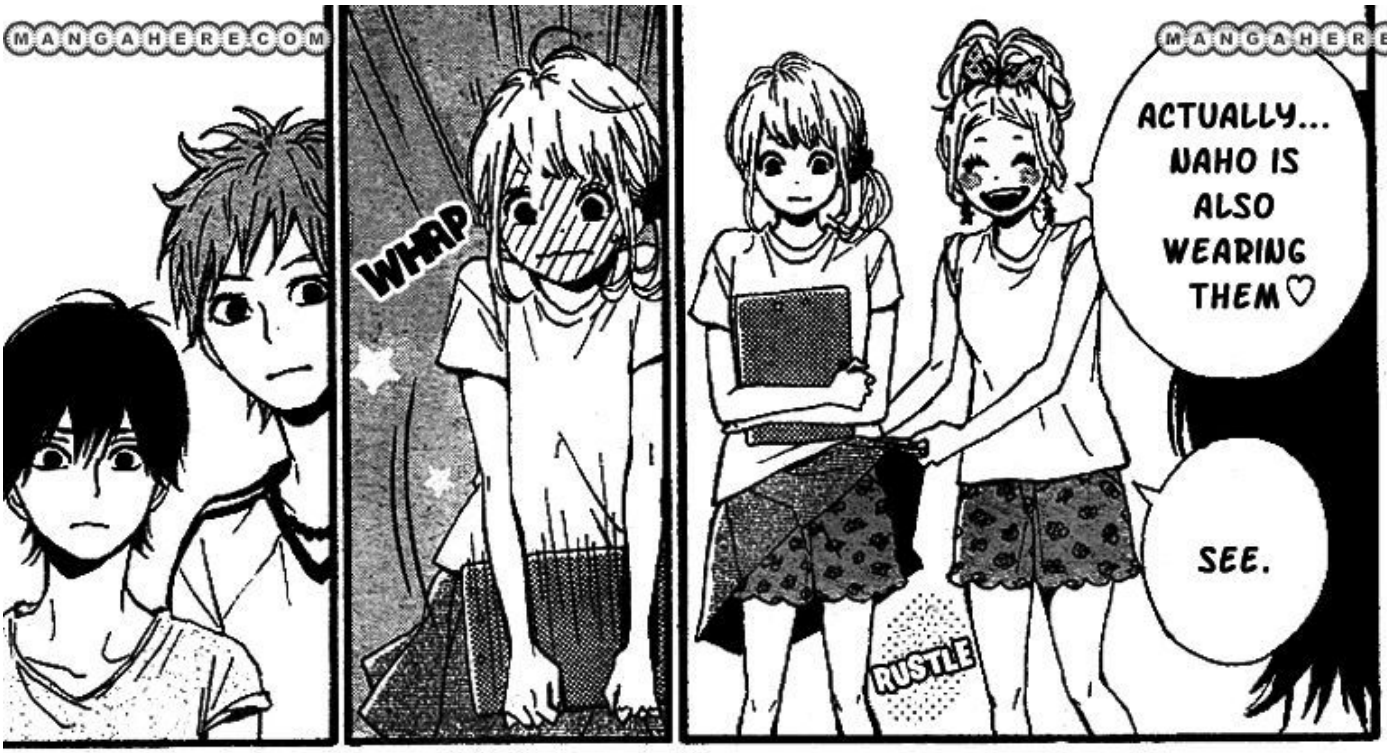

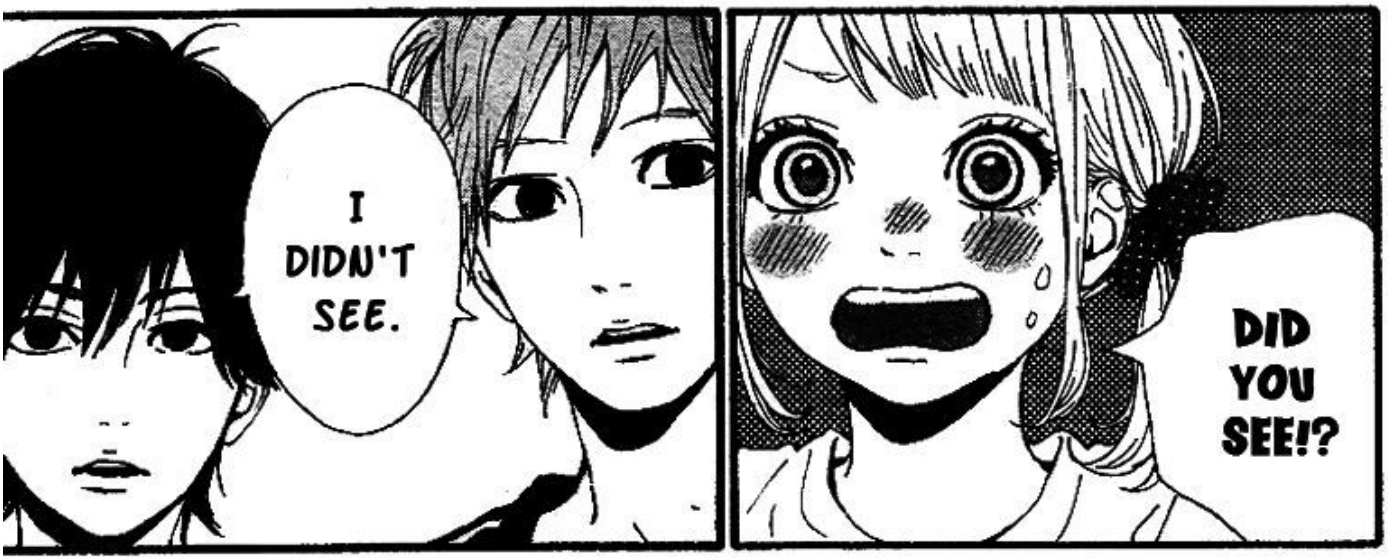

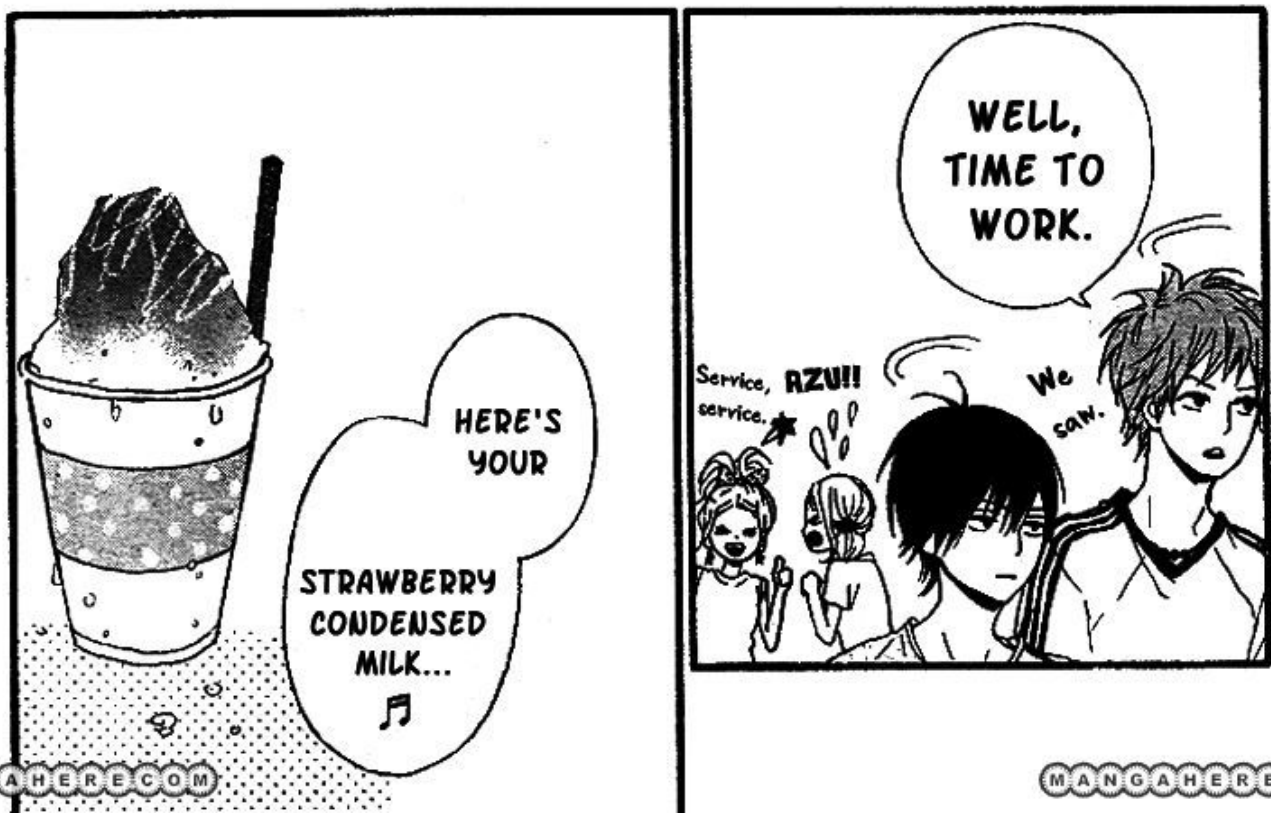

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WHAT ARE THEY, A COUPLE?

THAT SPRAY LOOKS REFRE-SHING.

THOSE GUYS ARE LUCKY.

HA HA HA HA HA

Stop Kakeru...

Eat this...

2-6☆ Pool House

Shave Ice 15

Watermelon 100

Ice 100

BREAK TIME...

FINALLY THE CROWD HAS DECREASED, HUH.

IT'S HOT...

PHEW ...

Cashier

Condensed Milk Topping Free!!

Blue Hawaii

Melon

Strawberry

Lemon

SUWA-SENPAI!

DON'T TELL ME, THE RUMORED SOCCER CLUB MANAGERS?

WHAT'S THAT.

Kyaaa

Cold...

Cute!

DO YOU WANT TO TRY?

WE'RE IN CHARGE OF THE MIST SHOWER.

The mist comes out from here.

YES!!!

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING...!?

Oh, and Naruse-senpai.

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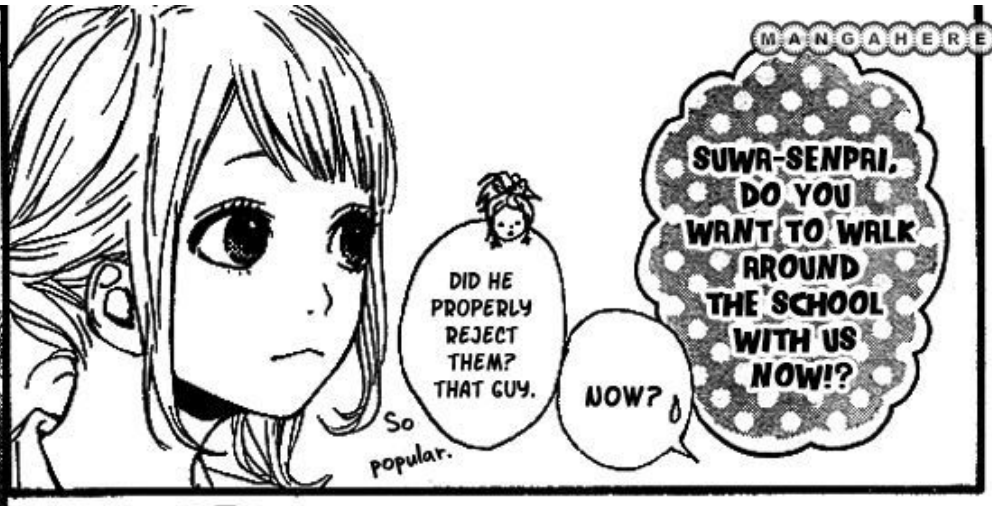

南塔子
ゆるかわ恋模様はクライマックスへ!!
360°マテリアル
君に届け
椎名軽穂
超キュート連載 第2話
バニー
目黒あむ
Orange
高野苺
魔法使いの心友
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YEAH, I'M OKAY.

ARE YOU FINE?

NAHO, AREN'T YOU HOT?

Have fun!

IT'S COMPLETELY FINE...

SORRY, EVERYONE. THANKS...

NICE, SUWA!

Alright.

• When the afternoon crowd decreased, Suwa told me to take over his place and let me be together with Kakeru.

• I want Suwa to know that I've noticed all the times he's been worried about me.

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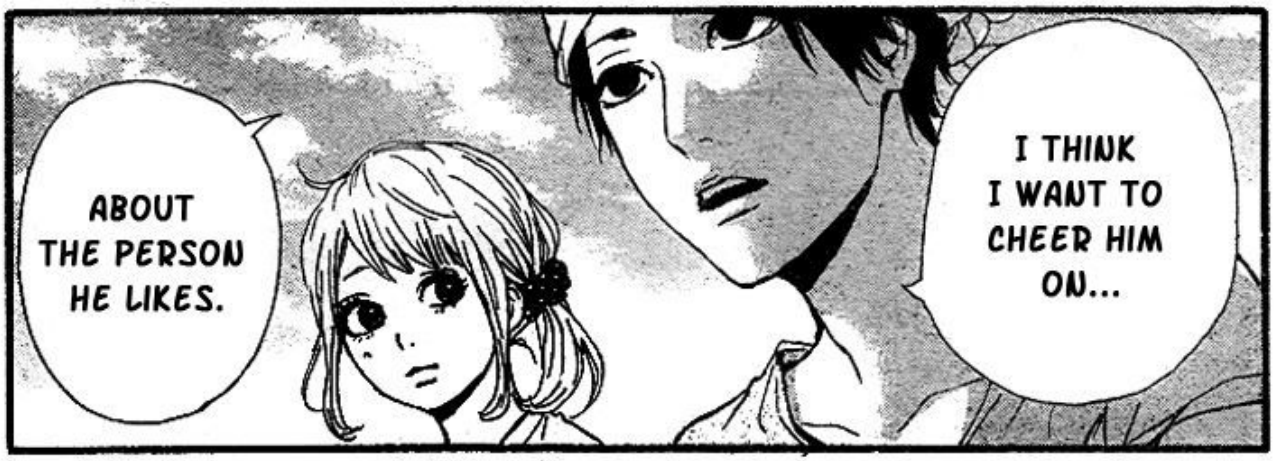

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I know about it.

That Suwa is always looking out for me.

YEAH.

It's just

become so

Always kind to everyone.

Non-chalant.

common-place.

COME TO THINK OF IT, NAHO,

ARE YOU USING THAT HAIRPIN?

HUH!

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I ABSOLUTELY WOULDN'T BE HAPPY.

BECAUSE IF I BREAK SOMETHING THAT YOU GOT FOR ME,

SOMEHOW, IT SEEMS WASTEFUL SO I HAVEN'T USED IT.

WELL,

IF IT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN'T USE,

I THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO GET SOMETHING THAT YOU WANTED.

From that reaction, you're not using it.

WHAT? NO!

WHEN WOULD IT BE GOOD TO TELL HIM?...

I SEE.

For me,

just the thought that "Kakeru got this for me"

it's a very, very important treasure.

SNAP

KAKERU... I WONDER WHAT HE WILL SAY...

Maybe I shouldn't do this after all...

Actually, today

I brought it with me.

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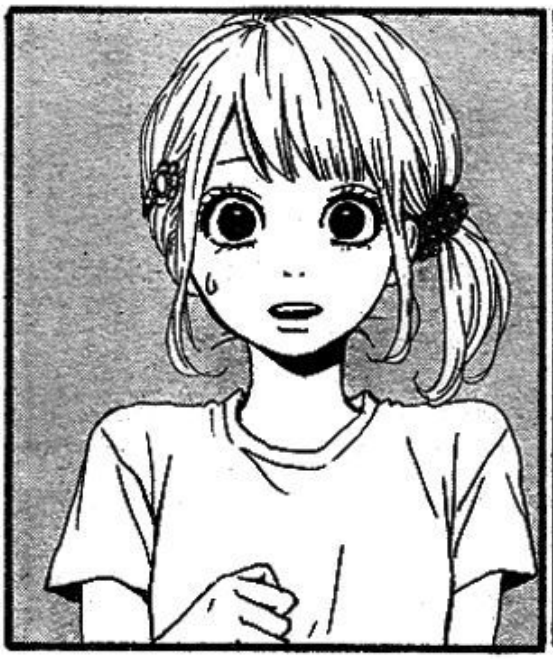

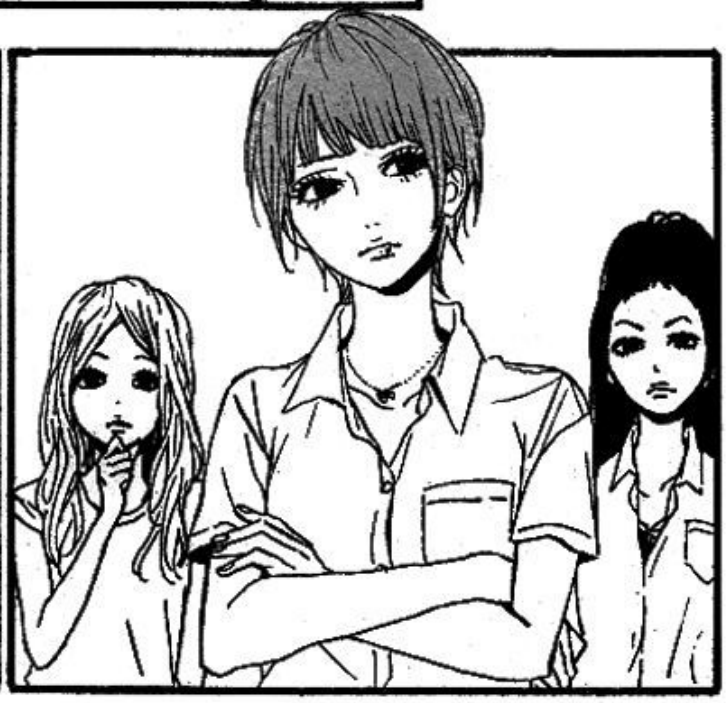

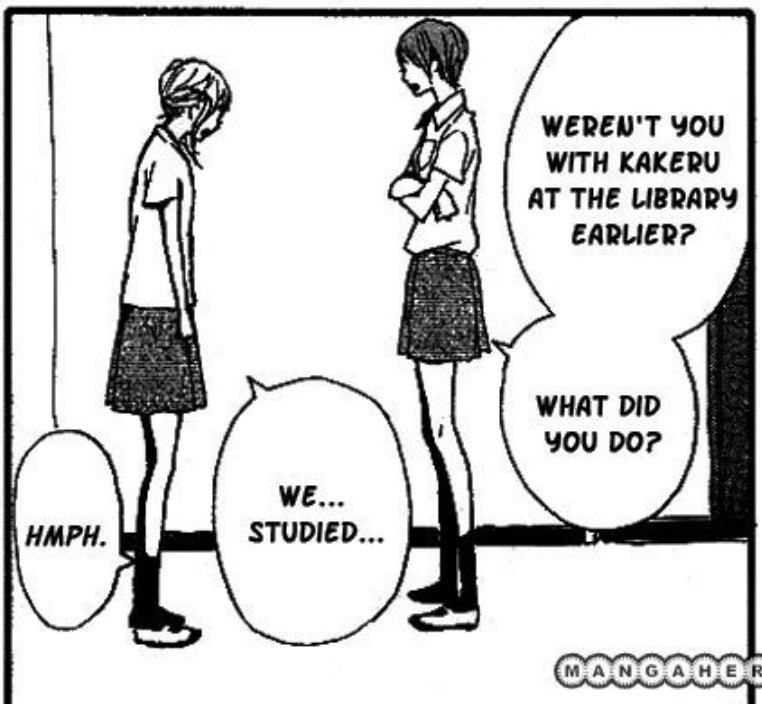

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an important item I received from Kakeru.

THIS IS...

WHERE DID YOU BUY THAT?

WHY?

LET ME SEE IT.

NO... WAY...

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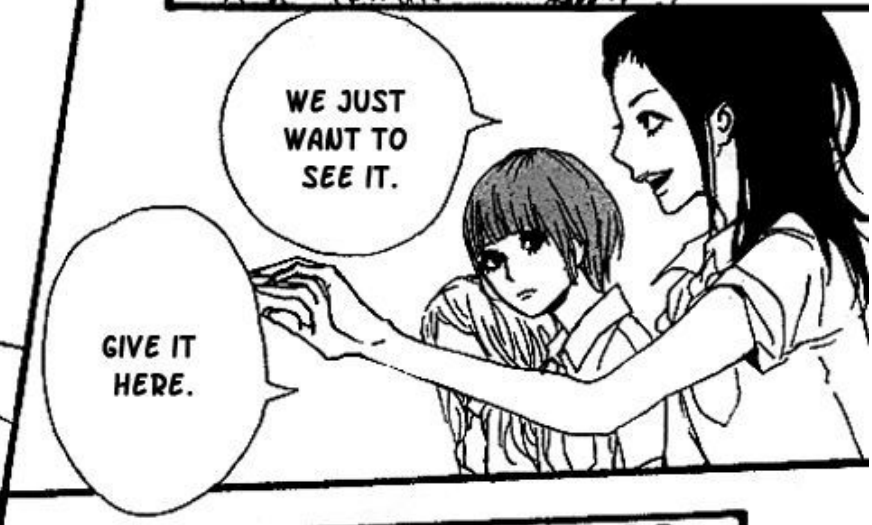

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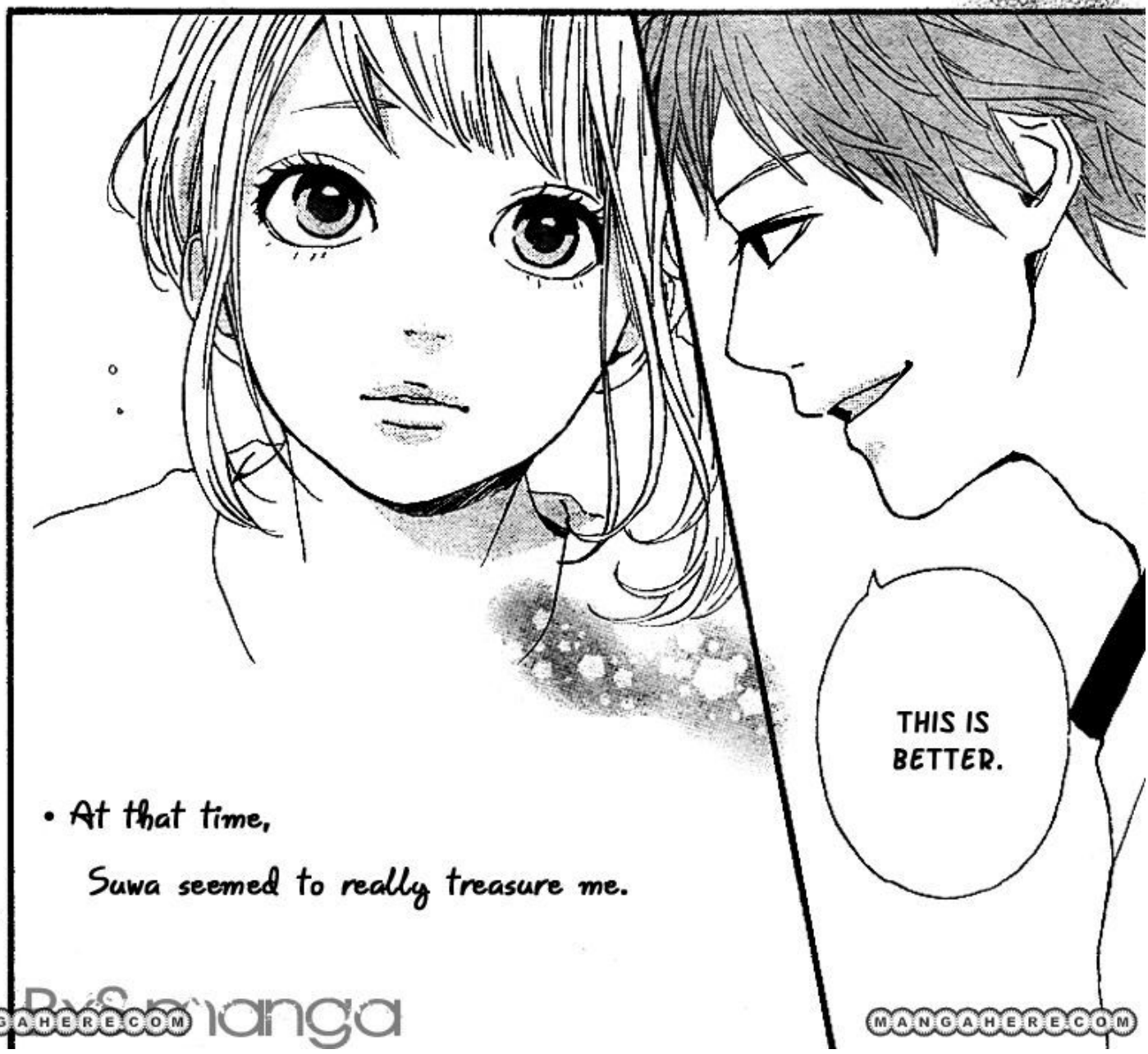

• At that time,

Suwa seemed to really treasure me.

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Bashful and gentle,

if you notice Suwa's kindness,
then tell him "thank you" at that time.

Then Suwa will surely be happy.

Suwa pulled my hand.

Until we arrived at the pool.

That really gave me reassurance.

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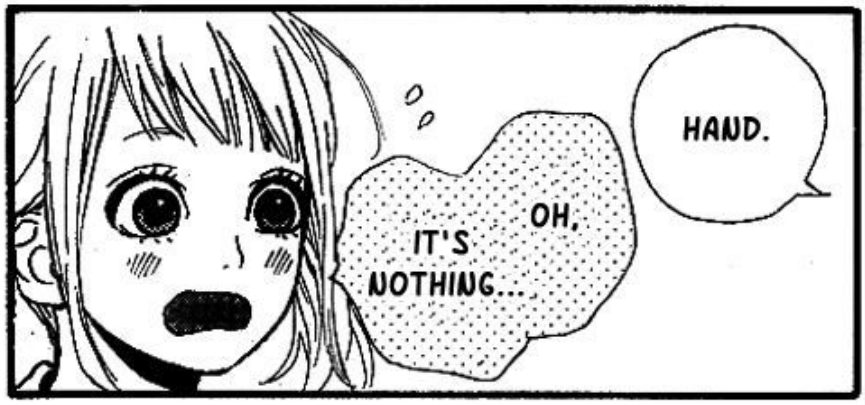

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STICK

BA-DUMP

BA-DUMP

I wonder how do you know, Kakeru...

"NAHO, IS YOUR HAND OKAY?"

"YOU GOT SCRATCHED EARLIER, RIGHT?"

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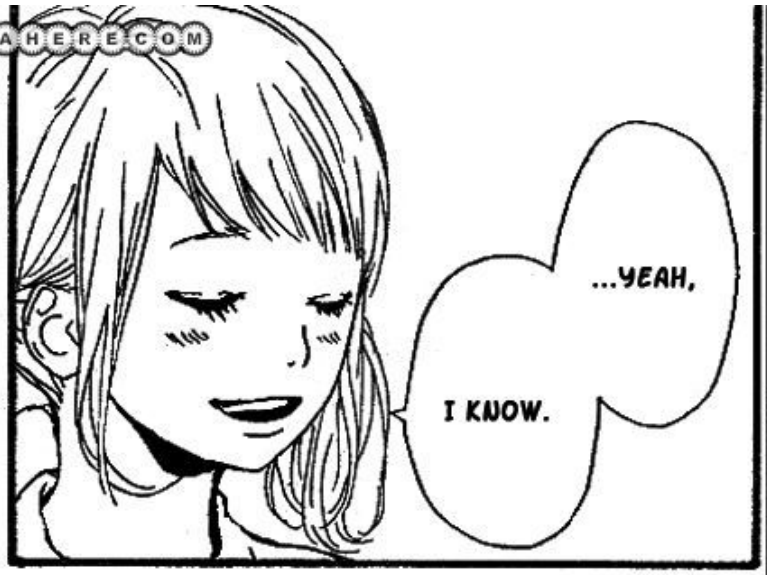

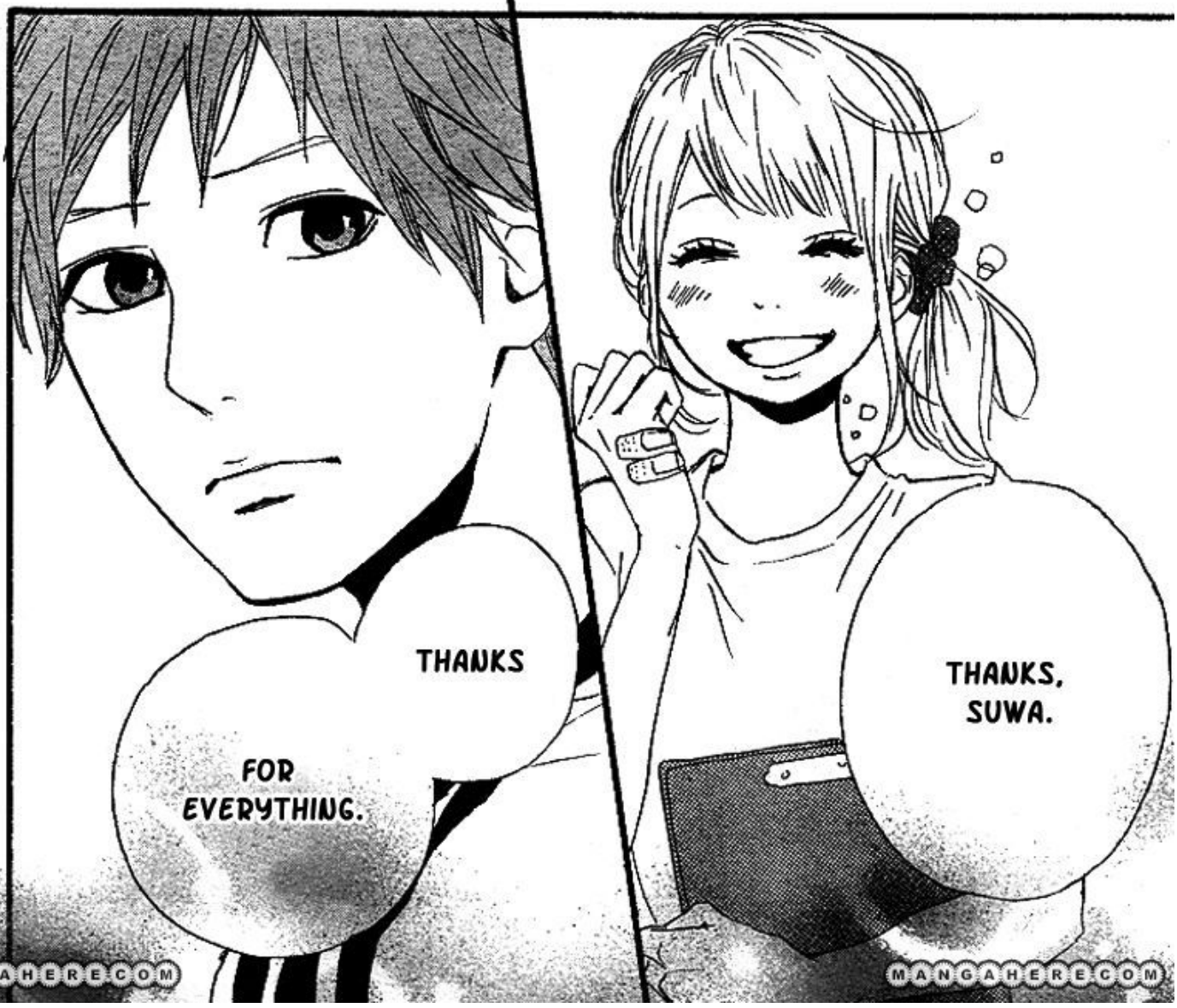

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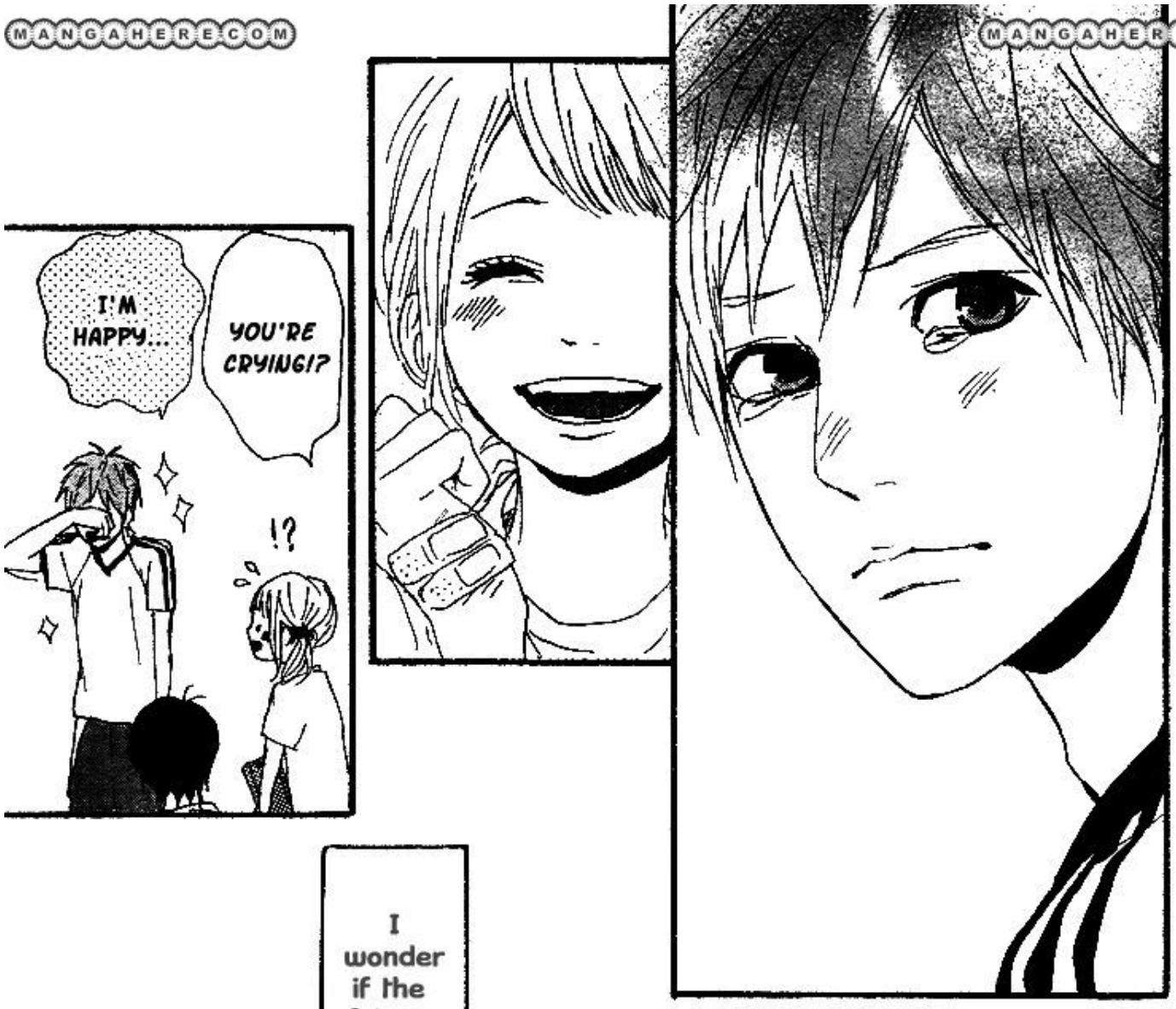

I wonder if the future me

knew that the past can't be changed and

sent the letter.

I might not be able to resolve

the sadness and regrets of my future self.

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However,

surely my future self is properly moving forward.

• Suwa is an important person who rescued my heart.

In those words, hope prevails.

Ch 6 End

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orange

The days you were there and my future.

「キミとボクの未来」

The end of the cultural Festival.
Your promise to watch the fireworks...
You can't overlook chapter 7!!

LETTER 7

▲2P

THE HOPES FOR THE FUTURE AND THE REGRETS OF THE PAST. CAN YOU FACE THOSE EYES?

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

コミックス「orange」第1巻は
大好評発売中です!

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『 July 15th 』

- The last day of the "Azalea Festival."
- Suwa changed places with me so that Kakeru and I worked together.
- Every time Kakeru and I end up together, I get nervous and can't talk to him.

SUPPORT TAKANO ICHIGO BY PURCHASING THIS MANGA WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

SO,

IF YOU COULD CONFESS TO ANYONE, WHO WOULD IT BE?

BETWEEN SUWA, HAGITA, AND ME

Wh-Why so suddenly....

U...

UM...

WHO'D IT BE?

EH?!

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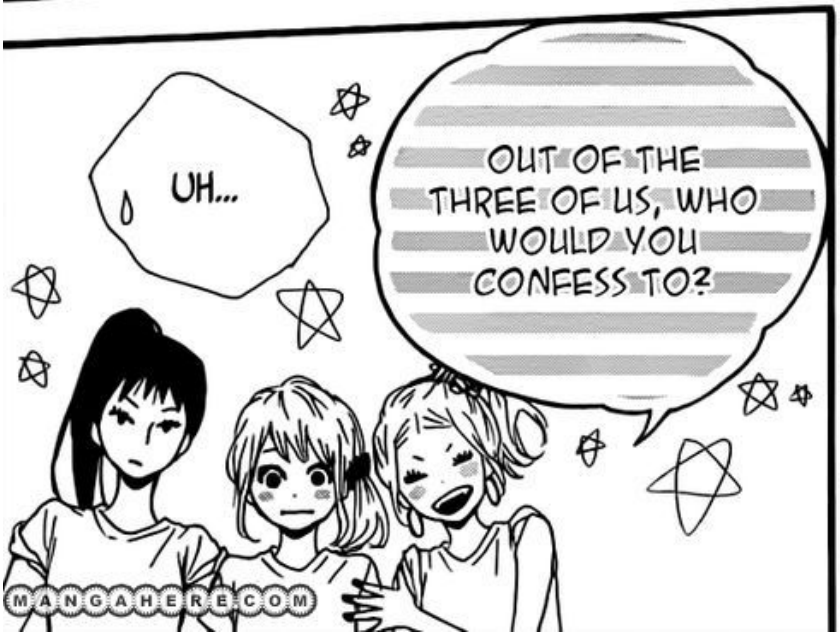

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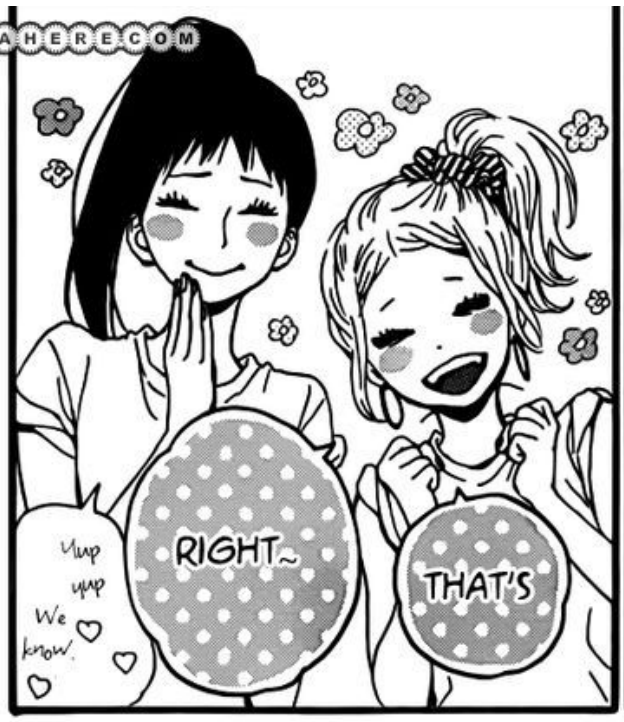

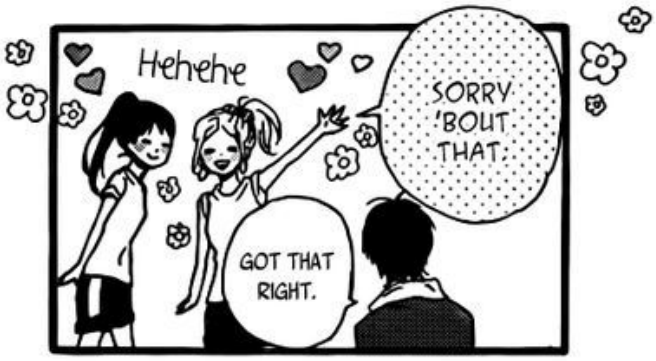

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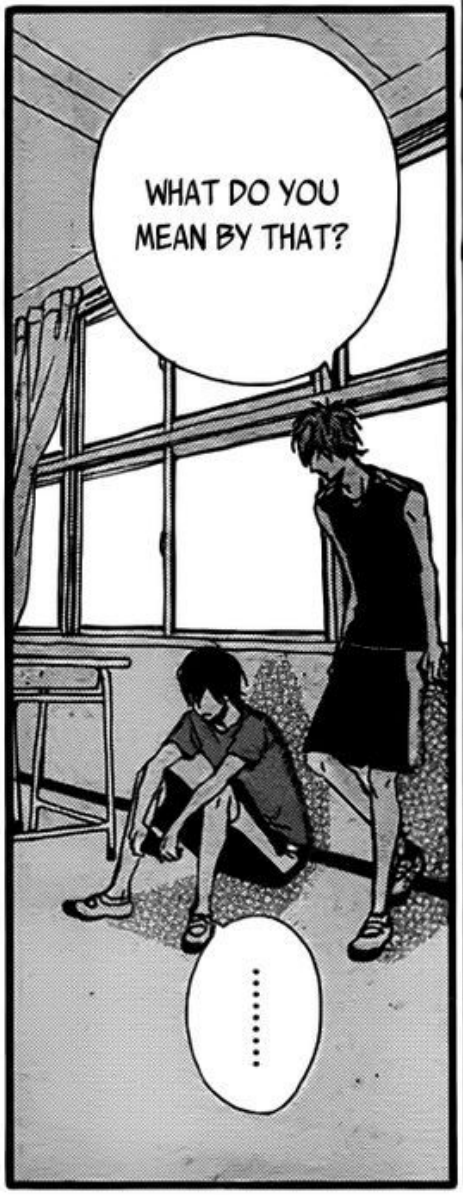

LIKE GOING OUT WITH UEDA.
I'VE DONE A LOT OF MULTIPLE CHOICE, BEEN WRONG AND REGRETTED IT.
"A LOT"?
.....
AND MADE PROBLEMS FOR NAHO.
I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO CAUSE REGRETS AGAIN.
I'M SCARED OF HURTING SOMEBODY.
WITHOUT TRYING FIRST?
THEN YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING AND THEN NOTHING WILL CHANGE, KAKERU.
SO, I WON'T CHOOSE.
IF NOTHING CHANGES, THAT'S FINE.
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ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
KAKERU?
.....
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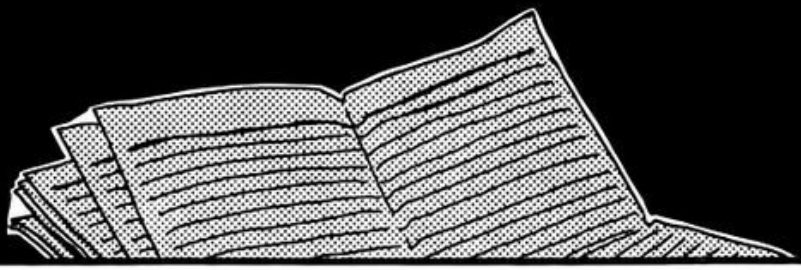
In the "Change the future" letter,

all of the points are right

but I

couldn't fulfill two of them.



◎ "On this day, I don't want you to invite him. At all."

◎ "Be honest about your feelings."

THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY, WE INVITED KAKERU OUT.

KAKERU AND UEDA GOING OUT...

What kind of influence did that have in the future?

be one more regret left.

there will

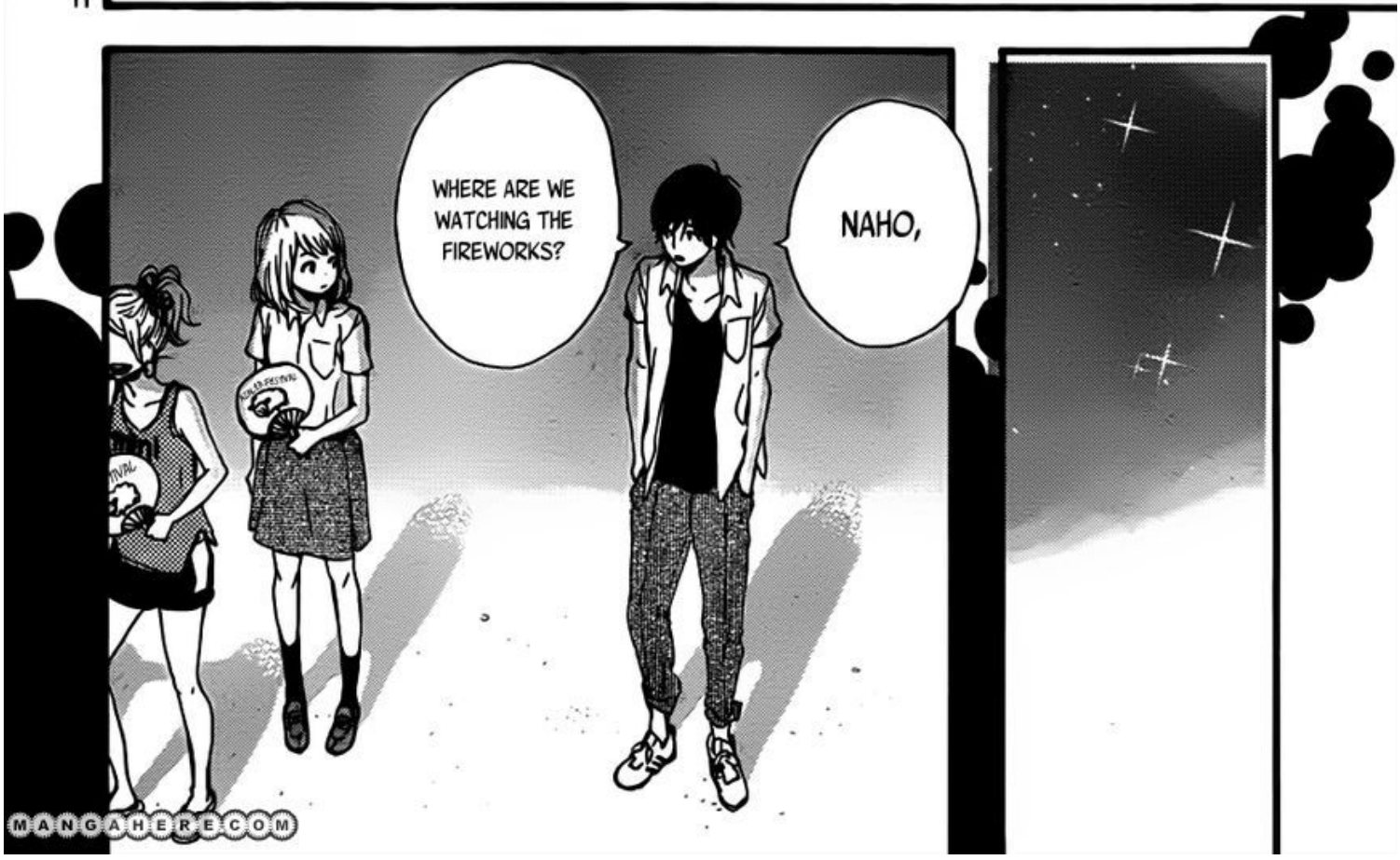
If I don't do this right

I don't want Kakeru to think about bad things.

◎ At the end of the last day, you'll watch the fireworks with Kakeru by the pool.

And that's it.

• Today is a mysterious and brave day. If it's as always, then you'll be fine.



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THE POOL!

AHAHA

You're telepathic now, Naho.

Really?!

I WAS THINKING THE POOL TOO.

WELL, OF COURSE IT DOES.

IT REALLY PISSES ME OFF.

THAT'S ANNOYING.

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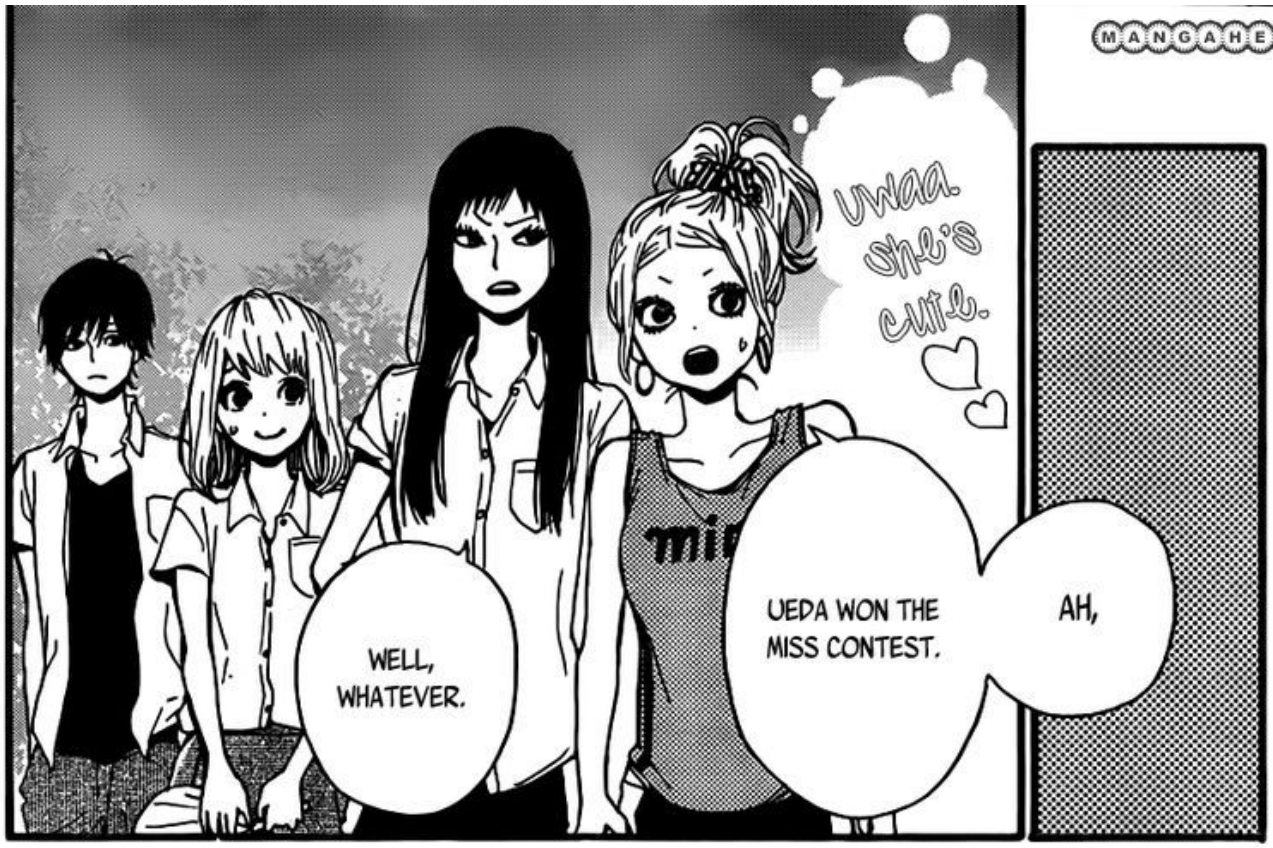

WITHOUT THEM, YOU LOOK LIKE AN ANGEL!
GIVE BACK MY GLASSES!
BUT LOOK, NOW YOU'RE AN IKEMEN! ♡ KYAA
THEN YOU REALLY SEE ME!
YEP.
YOU KNOW, THEY SHOULD REALLY GET TOGETHER.

It was me!
RIGHT HERE!
It has to be one of you!
WHO WAS IT?! WHO WAS THE ONE VOTE?!
BITCH!
YOU JERK!! I DIDN'T WANT A SINGLE VOTE

Y-YEAH. LET'S.
SHOULD WE HEAD TO THE POOL?

The fireworks are soon...
Will I be nervous? Have fun? I can't calm down.

?
SURE.
WOULD YOU HEAD UP FIRST, NAHO?

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TO BEGIN WITH, THIS "LIKE HER" "DON'T LIKE HER" THING.

IF YOU DON'T CHOOSE, THEN IT WON'T HAPPEN.

THEN, I'LL STOP LIKING NAHO.

IF YOU STARTED LIKING HER, SHE'D BE HAPPY THOUGH.

But you'd have to confess first.

...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THEN GO.

"GO"...

WHO KNOWS.

hehe

NO, TELL ME!

IT'D REALLY MAKE HER HAPPY?! REALLY?!

It wouldn't cause her problems?!

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SOME-HOW,

THE ME TEN YEARS FROM NOW

CAN SEE

KAKERU'S SMILE.

AH! YOU JUNIOR!

UEDA...

.....

I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.

GREAT TIMING.

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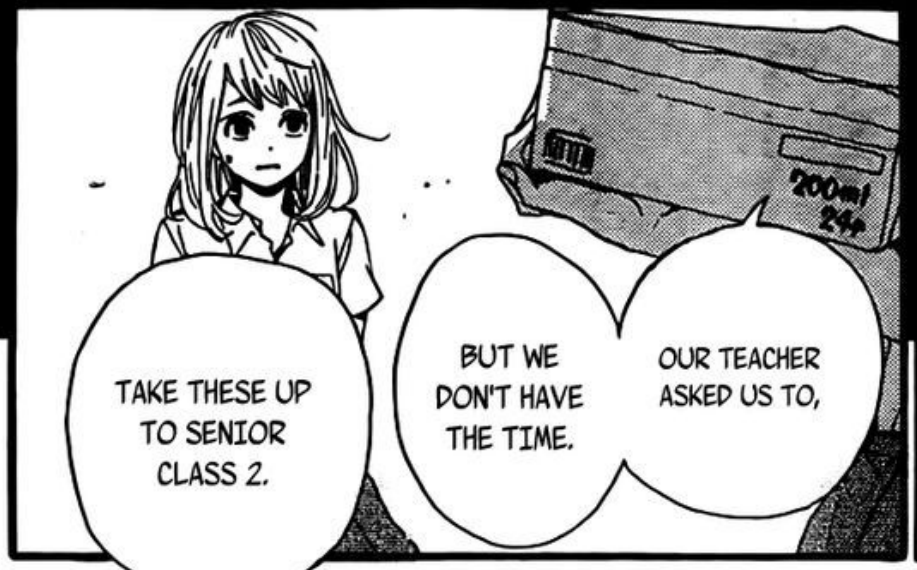

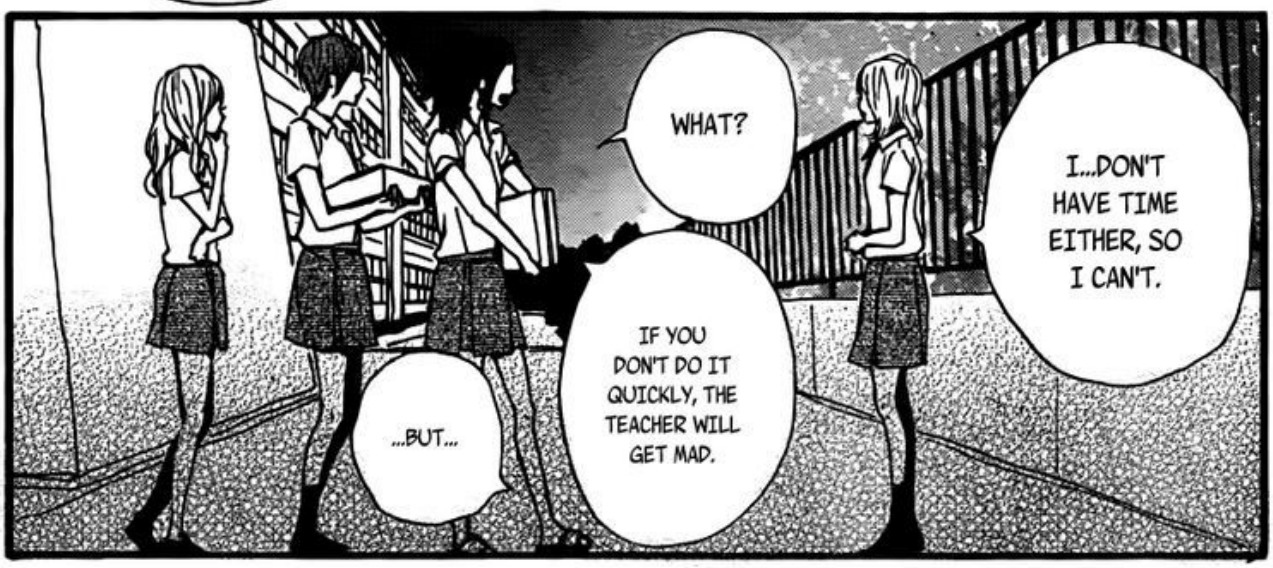

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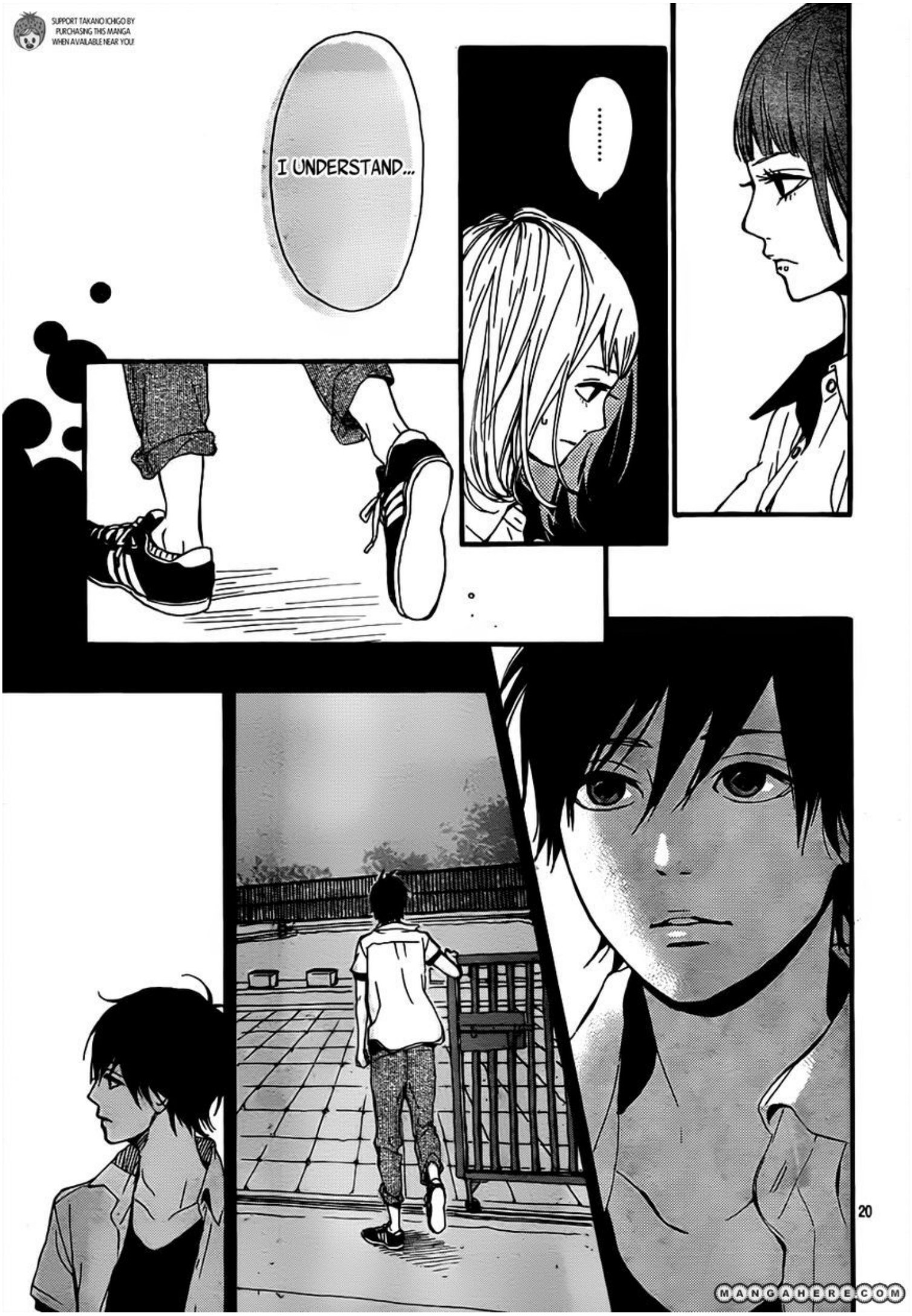

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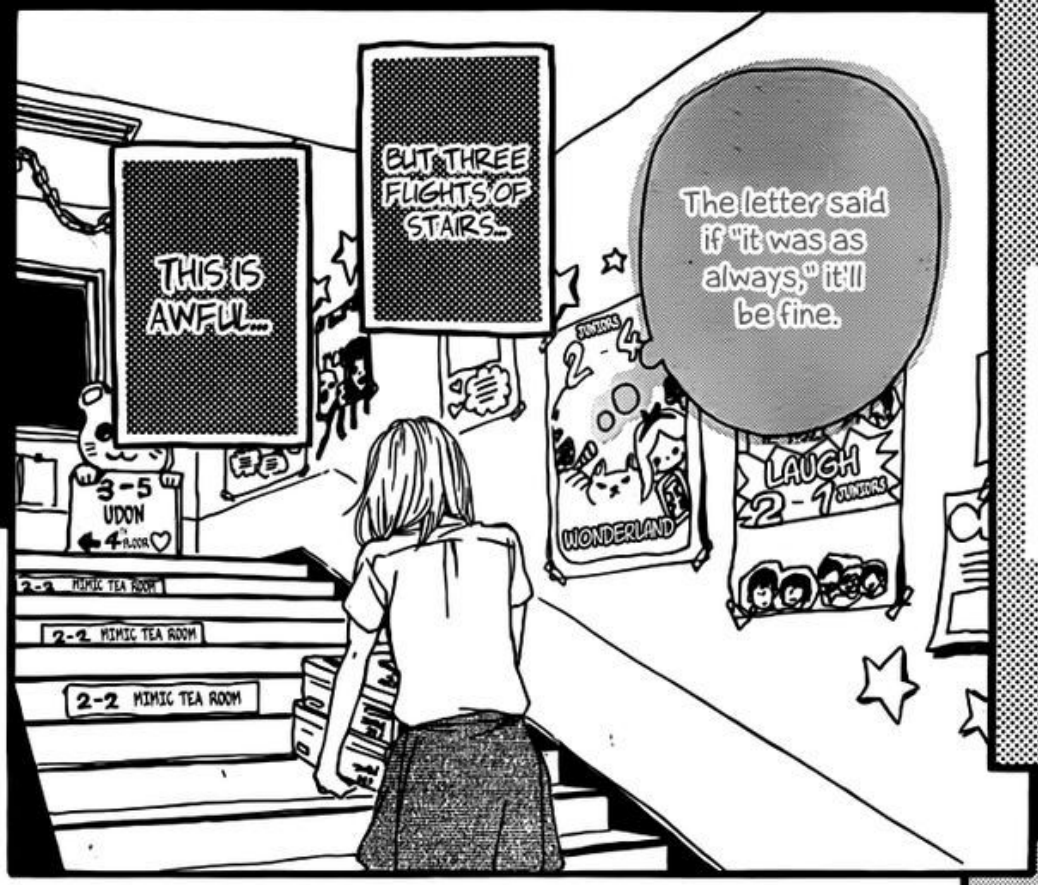
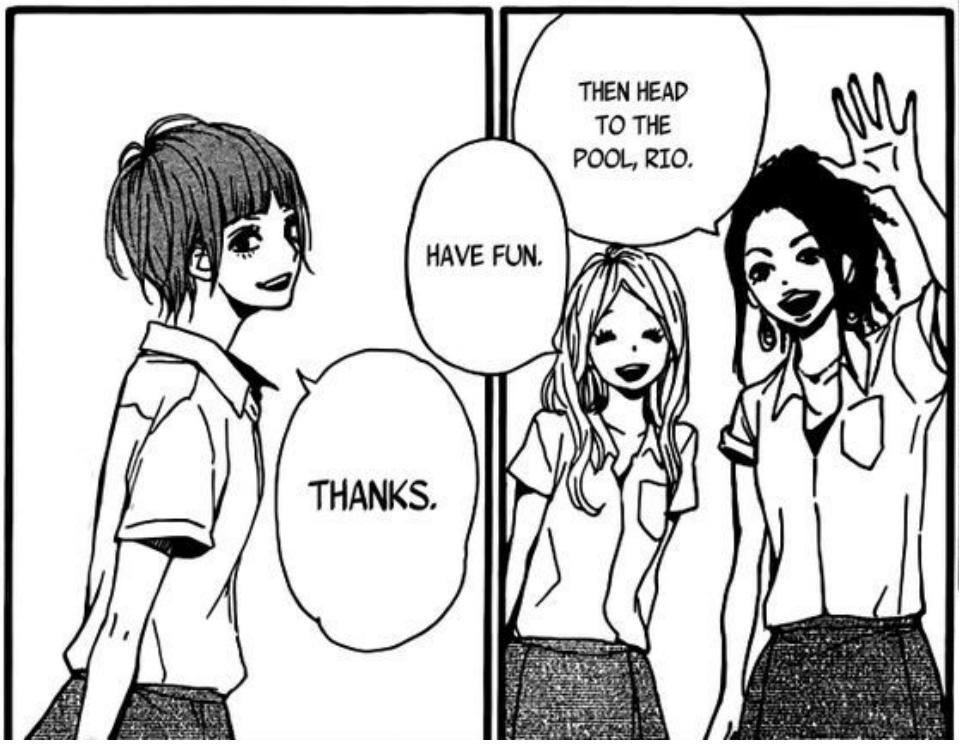
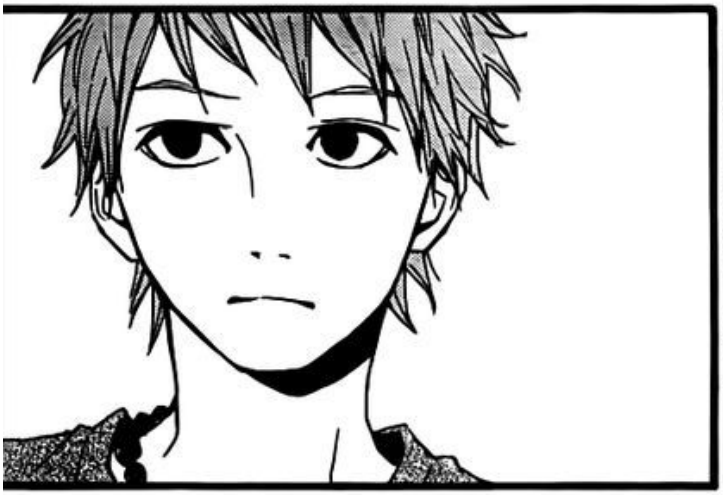
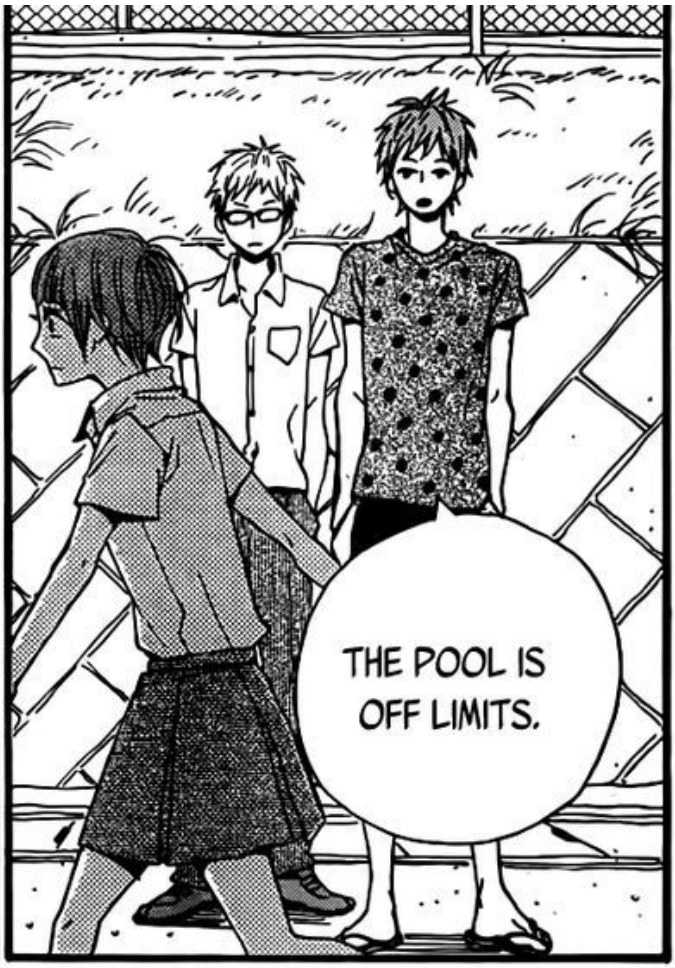


I'LL BE FINE.

IF I MOVE QUICKLY, I'LL BE ON TIME.







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WHEN AVAILABLE NEAR YOU!

...BUT WHY...

DID THIS HAPPEN TO THE FUTURE ME...?

boom

IT HAS TO BE DIF-FERENT.

I CHANGED THE FUTURE.

What'll I do?

TODAY IS SO IMPOR-TANT AND

A DAY THAT I COULDN'T MESS UP.

But I didn't make it.

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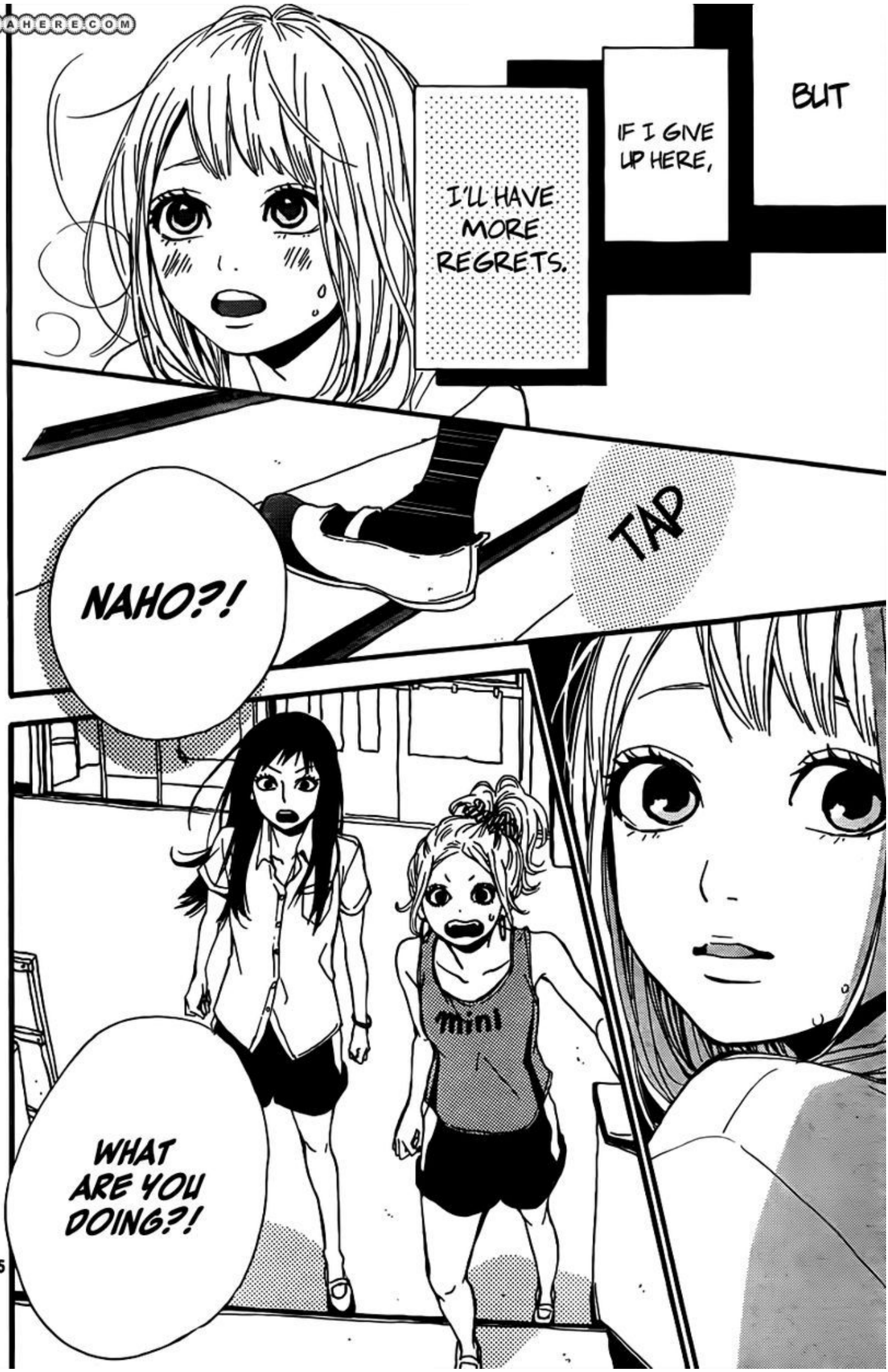

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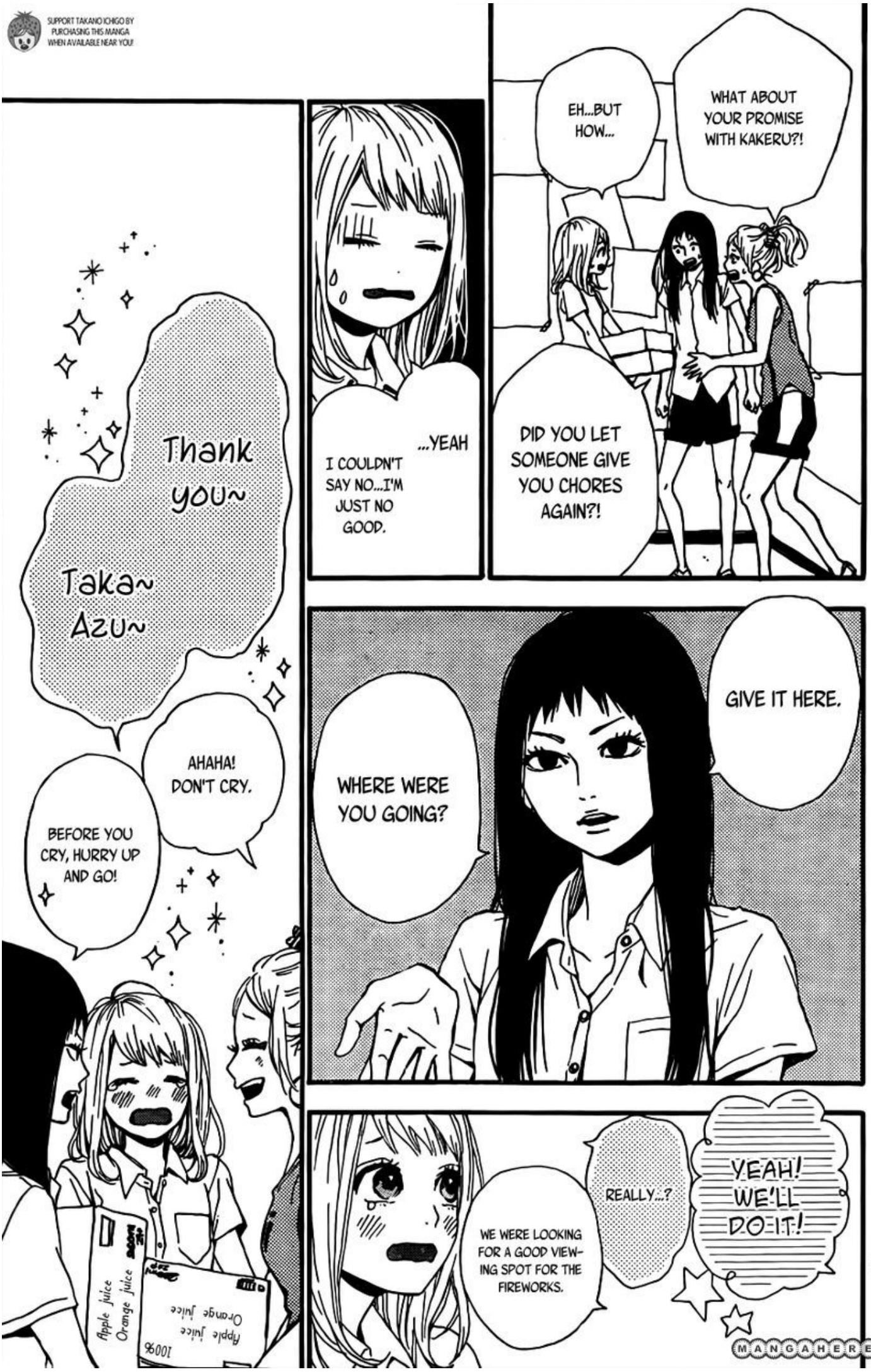

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I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS SO MUCH,

I COULDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT.

I WONDERED

HOW HE'D REACT.

NAHO,

I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T COMING.

NO WAY...I'D TOTALLY COME.

The sound of the wind through the trees.

The bugs buzzing.

SAME AS ME.

Due to the echo of the fireworks,

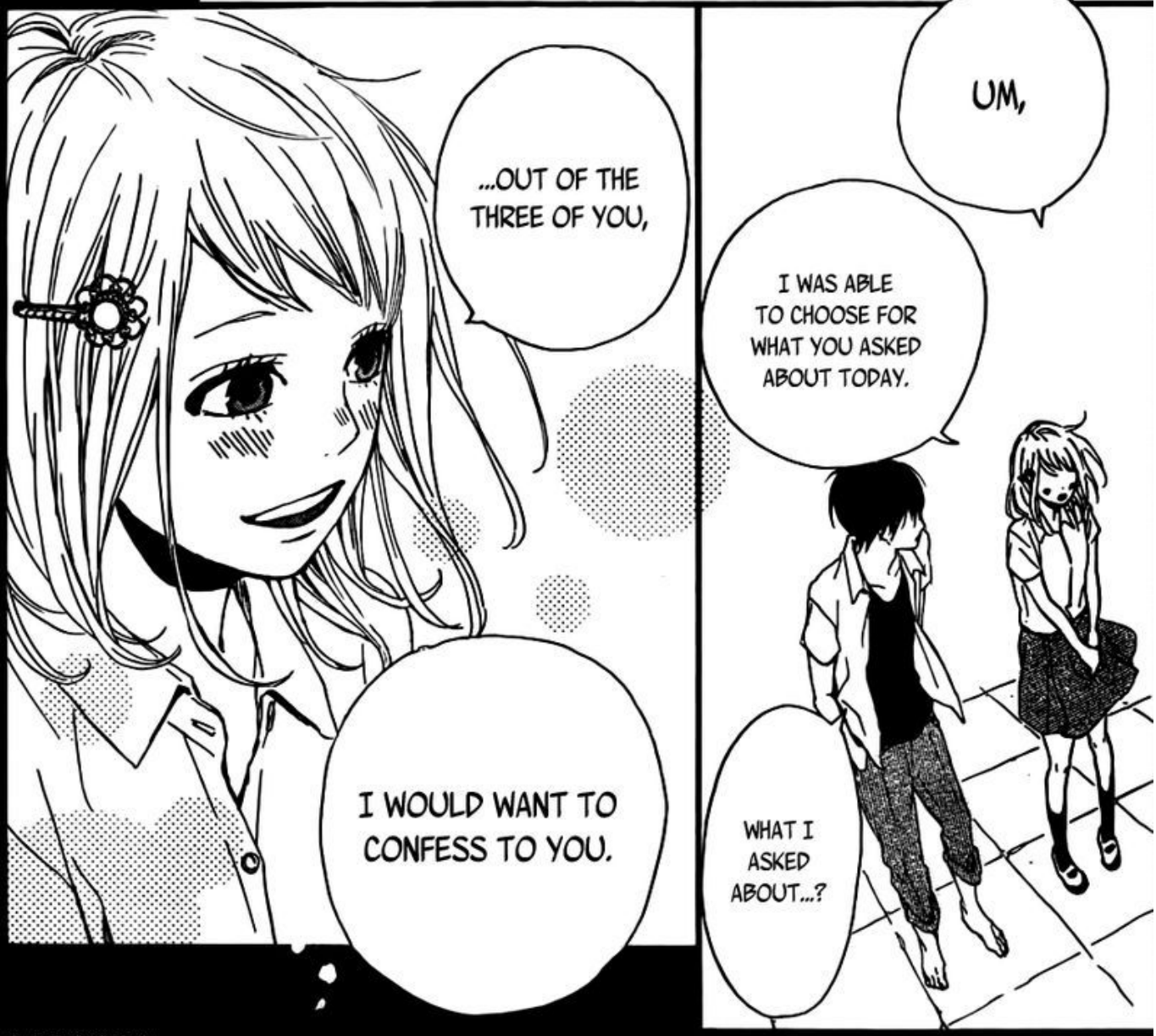
and because of the fact that I couldn't see Kakeru's face well,

and the darkness,

I was able to talk to him naturally.

Today is a mysterious and brave day.

If it's as always, it'll be fine.



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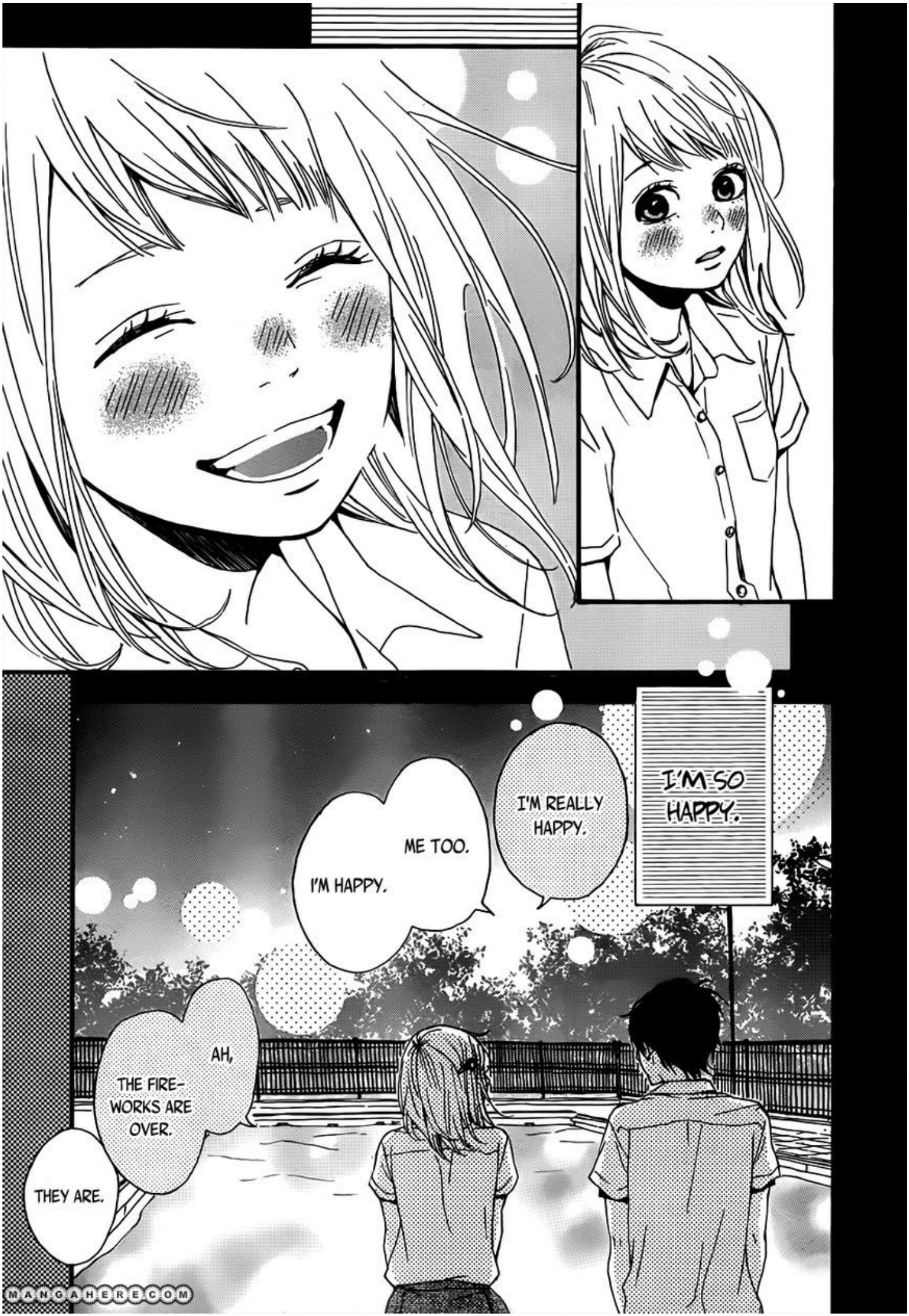
I'M SO HAPPY.
I'M REALLY HAPPY.
ME TOO.
I'M HAPPY.
AH,
THE FIRE-WORKS ARE OVER.
THEY ARE.
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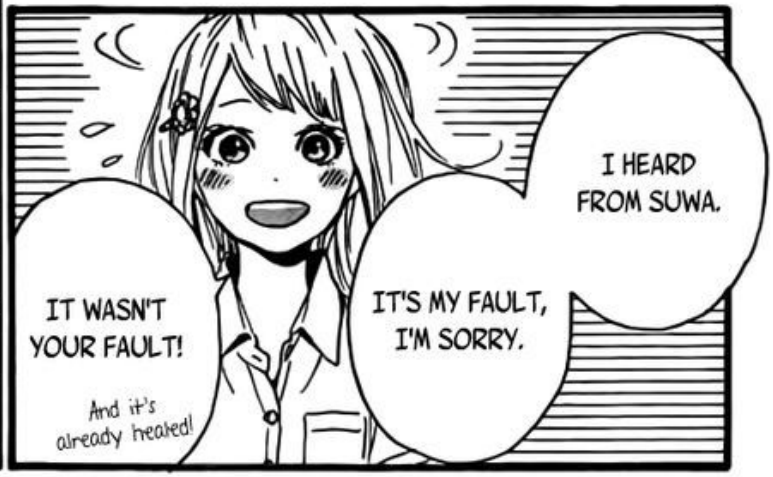

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That has to be...
If you compare it to my nervousness...
HYUUU
IT'S WEIRD.
I HELD HANDS WITH UEDA, BUT
I NEVER THOUGHT ANY-THING OF IT.
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THE FIREWORKS!
THEY WEREN'T OVER YET.
boom
boom
boom
BOOM
YEAH.
HOW PRETTY.
NAHO.
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THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY.
I'M GLAD WE WATCHED THEM TOGETHER.
I WILL NEVER FORGET TODAY.
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Those words that
Kakeru said

I will never
forget.

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WELCOME BACK, YOU TWO!
AHH!
DID SHE HOLD HANDS WITH KAKERU?
THE ME TEN YEARS FROM NOW,
WHY DO YOU GUYS HAVE THEM?
THE PRIZE FROM THE MISS CONTEST.
THEN, HERE'S SOME JUICE, EVERYONE.
WHAT MISS?
Kyaa
I'm glad!
YES. THANK YOU!
HOW WAS IT? HAD FUN?!
*TL/N: Cheers!
Kampai!
We've worked hard!
HE'S NOT HERE!!
THAT SHITTY FOUR-EYES!
Apple
Orange
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• Those words "Today was a complete happiness day."

I want you to give him
More and more happiness
For him to think about.

• That will surely "Save him".

11月超特大号につづく
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orange [オレンジ]

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Chapter 7: Letter 7

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tter story enters a new phase...

The Serial with a Lot of Attention!!

The days you were there and my future.

Orange

【オレンジ】

LETTER 8

ICHIGO TAKANO PRESENTS

高野苺

MC's Orange volume 1 is out with huge reviews.

After the rain and through the sun beams.

Please, just a little longer...

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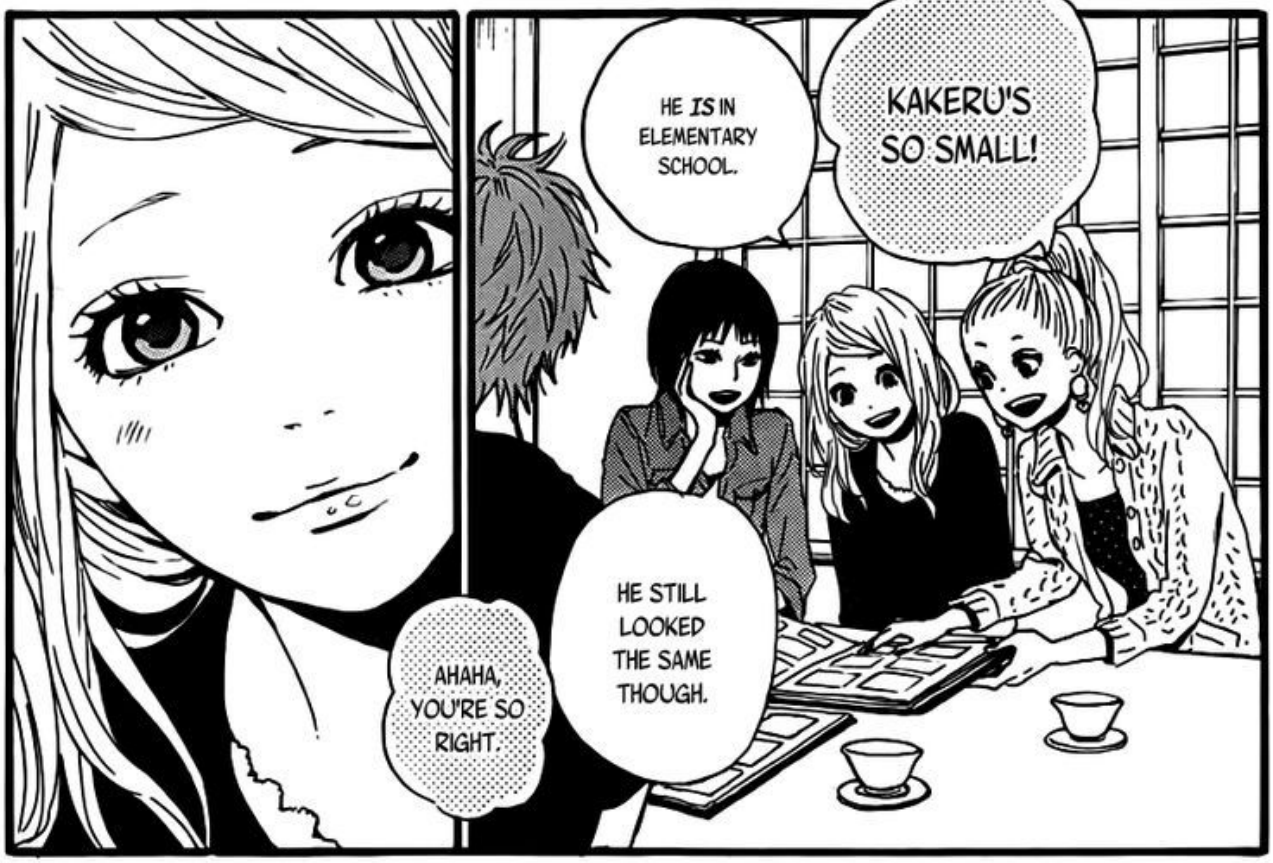

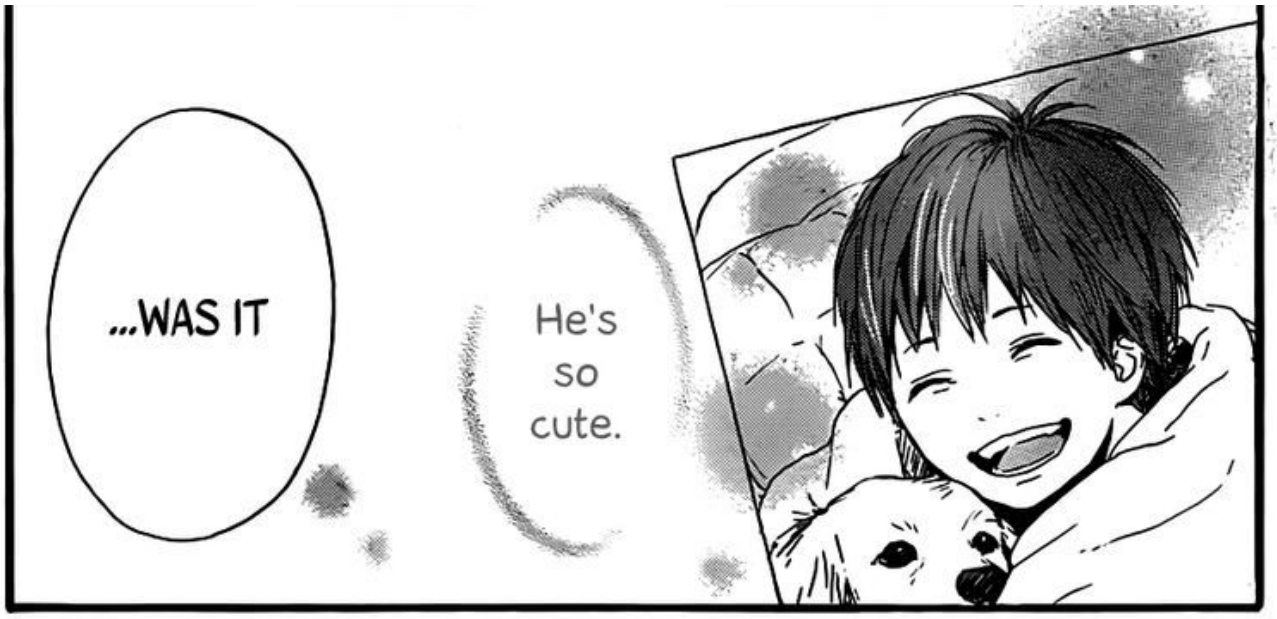

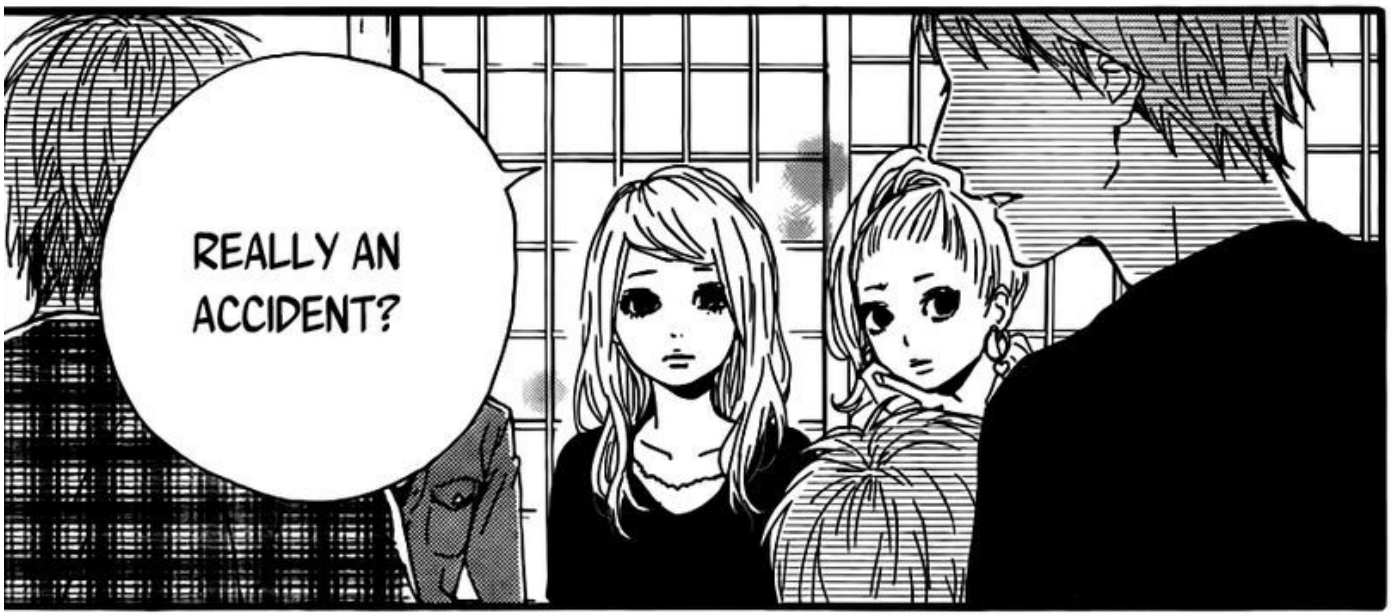

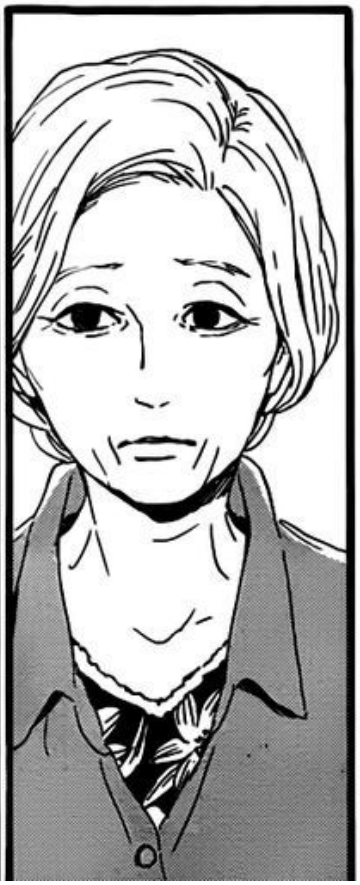

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I'm sorry Grandma. I'm sorry that I hurt you.

If something happens to me,
please tell everyone that it was an accident.

I'm going to Mom to apologize.

Thank you for everything.

I'm sorry Grandma. I'm sorry that I hurt you.
If something happens to me,
please tell everyone that it was an accident.

I'm going to Mom to apologize.
Thank you for everything.

Kakeru

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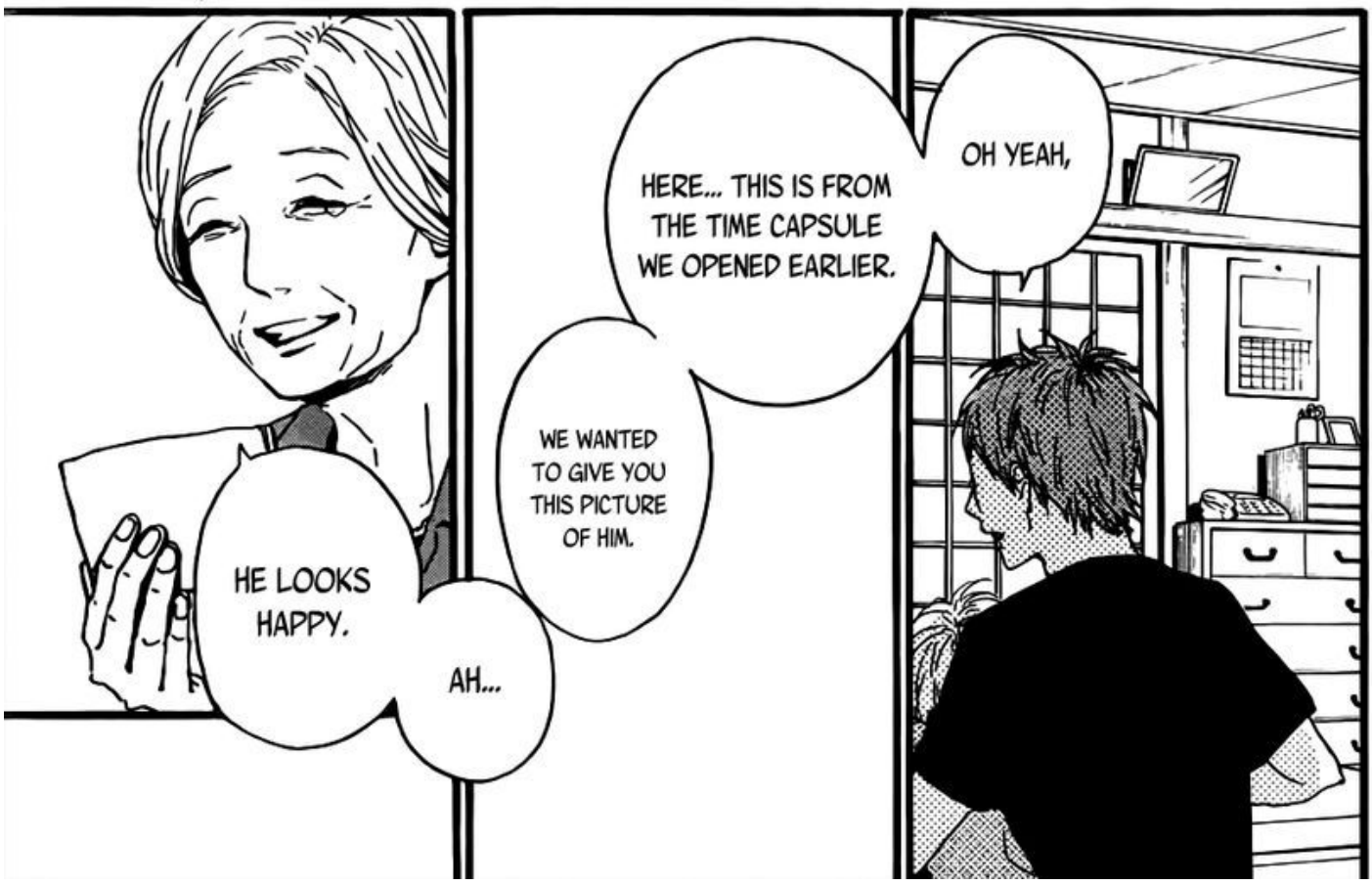
HE SAVED US...

Sorry...

I am so sorry.



We cried so much.

We promised that we would all smile that day, but

it's so sad without him.

We are empty.

What you did, and what you didn't do.

You will regret.

"Regret"

This is the weakness and pitifulness of you in the past.

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You'll be able to fix all the things I regret.

To the me ten years ago,

you will be okay.

BU

BUZZ

ZZ

BU

ZZ

...

I guess it's all thanks to this hair clip

that we held hands.

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But Kakeru actually smiled.

The future me didn't get a hair clip

So certain things are probably different.

Me?!

Ask Kakeru if he can come too.

THANKS~ Chu

Azu
8/1 13 : 22
Hey —☆

We're meeting at 17:30 for the MatsuBon.
At the Flower Clock Park~

YAY!!

*T/N: A yukata is a summer kimono.

Kakeru
8/1 14 : 31
Re :

I want to come.

Naho, are you going to wear a yukata?

BABUMP

BABUMP

CHALALAN

Sorry to bother you during summer break.

Can you come to the Matsumoto BonBon festival on the 4th?

Azu and Taka are coming too.

BEEP

BEEP

BEEP

☐Kakeru
☐8/1 14 : 53
☐Re :

I'll wear one if I have one, but I probably don't.

『 August 4th 』

- The six of you go to the "Matsumoto BonBon".
- Even though he said he probably didn't have one, Kakeru comes wearing a yukata.
- There were so many people that we got separated, and Kakeru and I ended up alone.

- While we were talking, I asked Kakeru about his mom without knowing the details.

Kakeru didn't say anything.
And I changed the subject.

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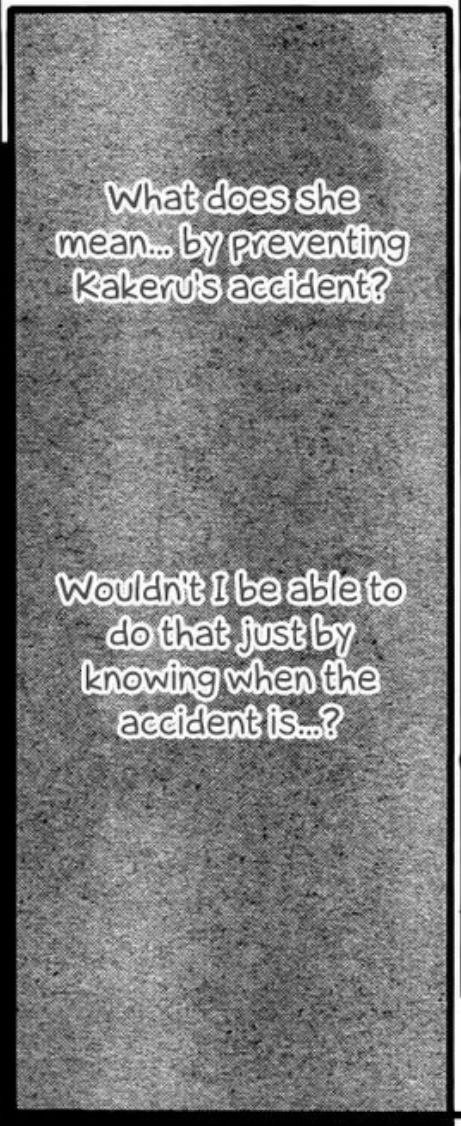
◎ I want you to ask him about her.

I think that Kakeru's regret is that he thinks he couldn't help his mom.

I want you to save him from that regret.

If you can do that, you will probably prevent his accident.



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「 February 15th 」

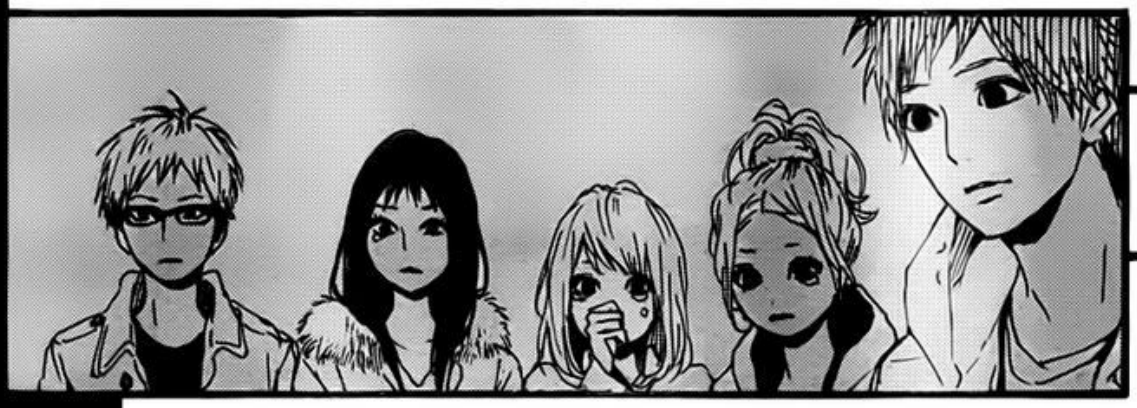
- Up until that moment, it was just a normal day.

- That night, I was writing in my diary like usual, when I got a call from Suwa saying "Kakeru's been in an accident".

"He didn't make it".

- The accident happened around 8,
At the intersection close to his house.

- While Kakeru was riding his bike, he came out in front of an oncoming truck.



- We couldn't do anything. Not save Kakeru from the accident, or even help him in any way.

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◎ I want Kakeru to not choose death.

◎ I want to lighten the burdens he was carrying.

◎ I want to carry his troubles with him.

◎ I want you to never leave him alone.

◎ I want you to save his heart.

Save him at all.
Then just preventing the accident
won't
Kakeru's death...
Was suicide...?
Then what should...
What should I do to help him?
NAHO, HAVE YOU STARTED YET?
Ah, not yet.
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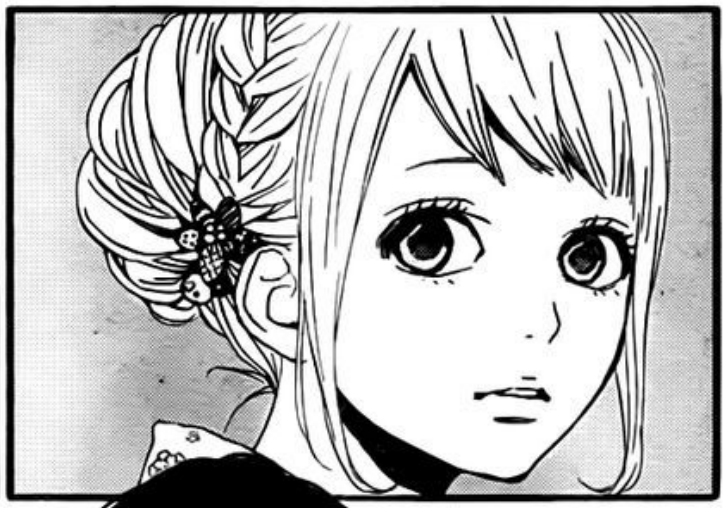

I CAN SAY THIS BECAUSE WE'RE FRIENDS.

...BUT YOU'LL THINK ITS WEIRD.

WH-WHAT IS IT?!

haha

WELL, IT'S...

Ahaha

I KNEW IT!

NOT LIKE THAT.

IT'S A LITTLE... STRANGE.

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY IT.

And embar-rassing.

WAA

IT- IT IS WEIRD.

YOU'RE BLUSHING, NAHO.

Ahaha

CUTE.

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HOW MANY STRAWS? NEED ONE FOR YOUR BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?

HERE.

THAT'S ¥250.

*T/N: Around $2.75.

YEAH, JUST A LITTLE CRUSHED.

YOU ALRIGHT, NAHO?

HAHA

NO, WE'RE NOT TOGETHER.

BOYFRIEND?!

!!

HAHAHA, I SEE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE A COUPLE.

I'm so old! Haha.

YOU'RE ASKING THAT NOW?

OH YEAH, KAKERU. WHO'S THAT PERSON YOU SAID YOU NOTICE?

Matsumoto Bonbon

Matsumoto Bonbon

Matsumoto Bonbon

Y-YEAH.

IT'S 'CAUSE WE'RE ALONE THAT WE LOOK LIKE A COUPLE.

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I SEE...

THE PERSON HE LIKES.

But that's good I guess.

WANT TO GO TO THE SHRINE?

YEAH, SURE.

THAT'S A LITTLE SHOCKING.

HE DID IT...

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WHAT DID YOU WISH FOR?
THAT YOU
WOULD BECOME COMPLETELY HAPPY.
...ME?
IS IT OKAY TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU WISH FOR?
EH?! ISN'T IT?!
Will something bad happen?!
YEP.
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◎ I want you to ask him about his mom.

*T/N: Fried noodles with veggies.

I CAN'T ASK HIM NOW

I'M HUNGRY...

I WANT SOME YAKISOBA.

SURE...

YEAH.

THEY'LL REALLY COME HERE? AZU AND THE REST?

WHY AGATA FOREST...?

It's so far.

THERE'S NO ONE HERE...

And it's dark.

WHEN HE'S HAVING A GOOD TIME. I'LL LEAVE IT.

I'LL ASK HIM LATER.

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*T/N: Wooden sandals
MY FEET ARE TIRED.
'CAUSE OF THE GETA.
KAKERU...
CAN I ASK WHAT YOU TOLD YOUR MOM?
IT SHOULD BE FINE NOW.
...I TOLD YOU IT WAS A SECRET.
I'LL ASK HIM TILL HE ACTUALLY ANSWERS.
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY WHAT'S BOTHERING HIM RIGHT NOW.
THEN TELL ME ABOUT YOU? WHAT YOU'RE THINKING?
WHAT YOU REMEMBER? WHAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT.
...THERE'S NOTHING.
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YOU MIGHT DISLIKE ME IF I TOLD YOU.

...I THOUGHT

I WON'T. NEVER.

...YEAH.

THANKS...

BUT THE BIGGEST IS THE DAY OF OPENING CEREMONY.

I HAVE LOTS OF REGRETS

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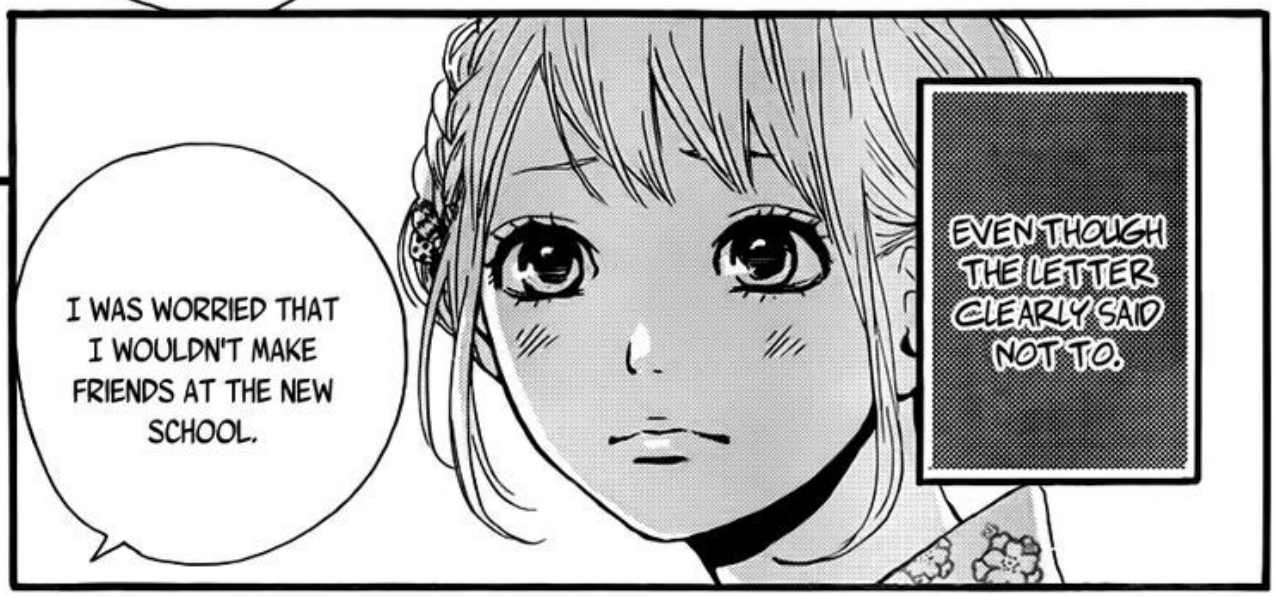

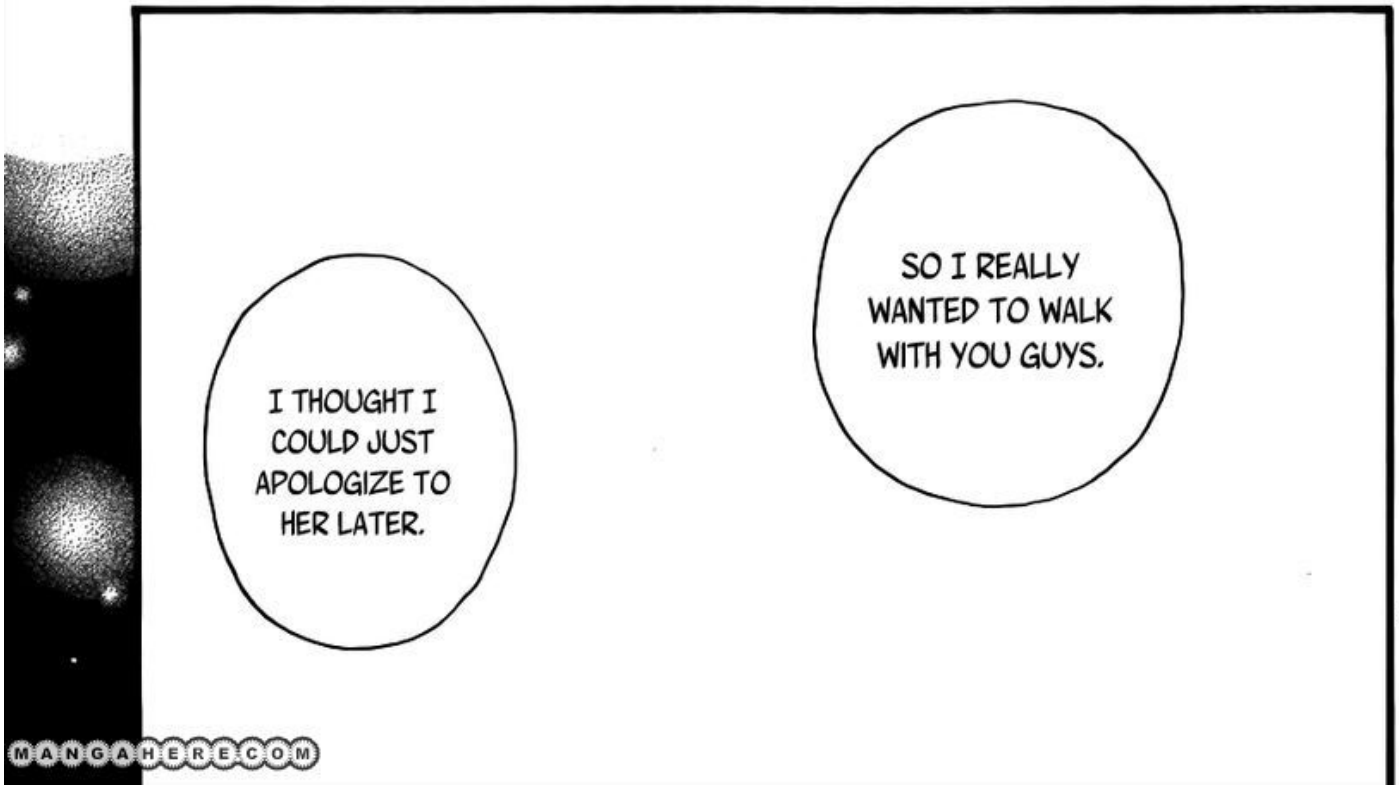

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SO I ASKED GOD TO TELL HER I'M SORRY.

THAT I REGRET IT...

...IT'S ALL RIGHT.

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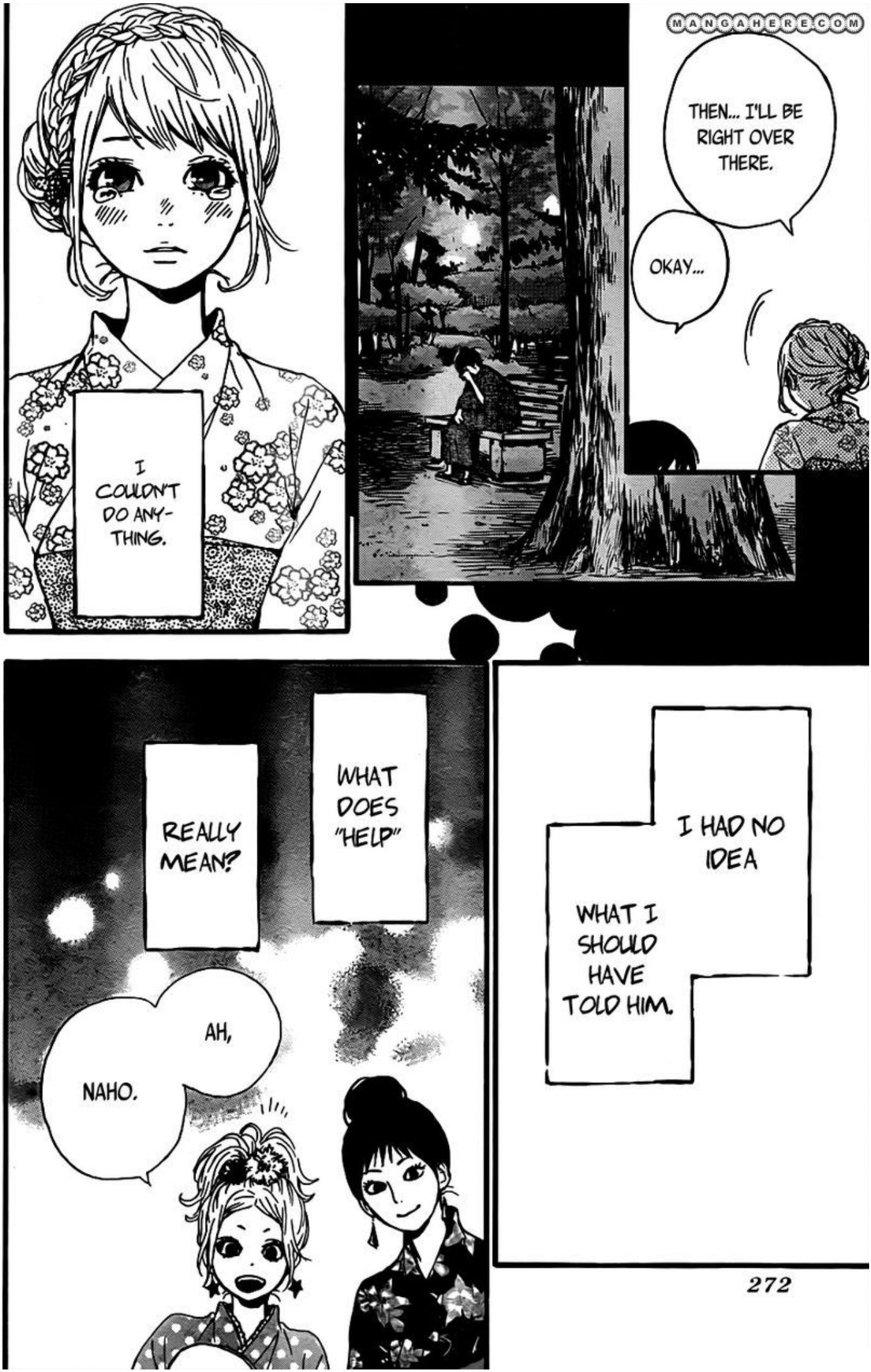

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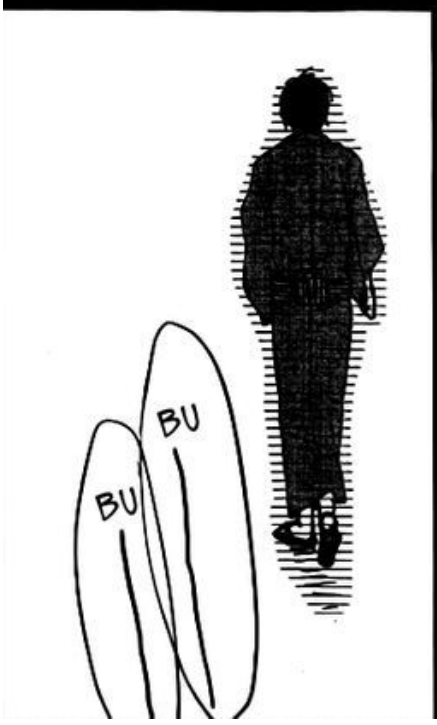

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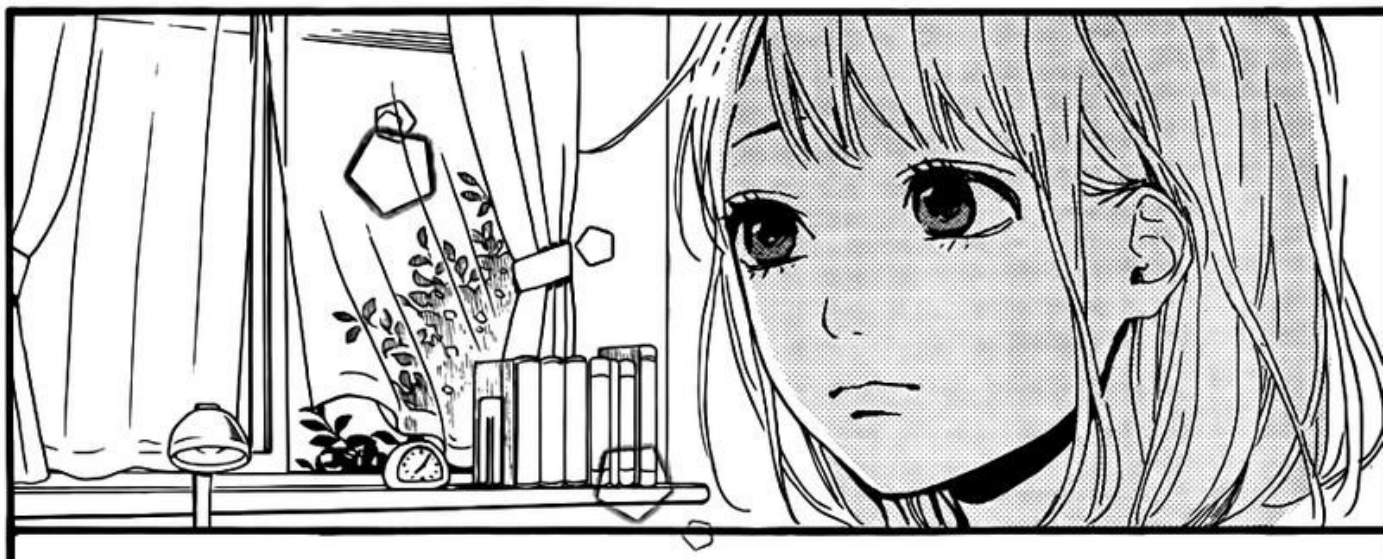
Are you okay? I'm worried about you.

Know that you can tell me anything when you need to.

Kakeru
8/4 20:39

I'm heading back.
Thank you for today.

Thank you.



But

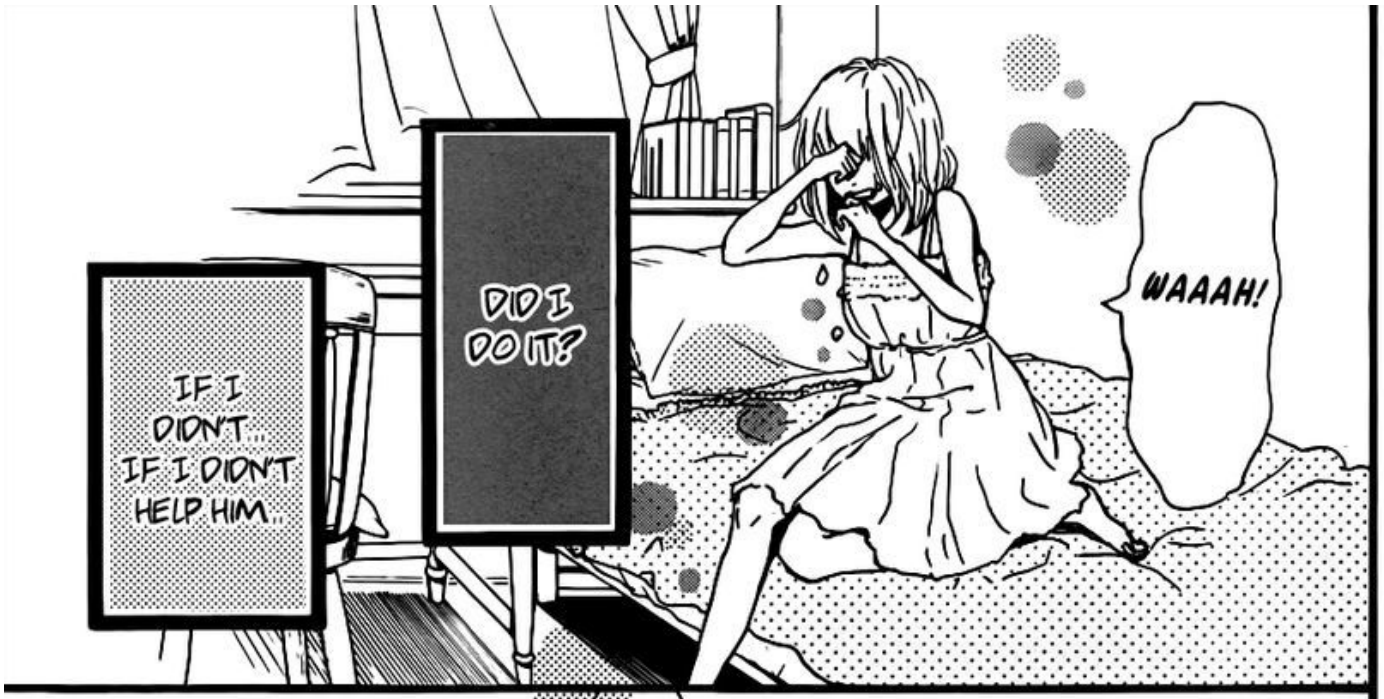
The days passed and I couldn't do anything.

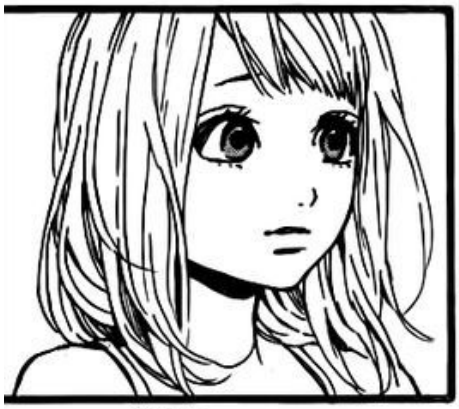
With this,

I can't say I helped him.

then

What should I do...?





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SUWA KNOWS KAKERU WELL.

THIS ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN DO BY MYSELF.

...I SHOULD TRY

TALKING TO SUWA.

About the letter and everything.

I'll try telling him...

I DON'T KNOW IF HE'LL BELIEVE ME, BUT...

UM...

I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT KAKERU...

...YEAH?

...I WANT US TO HELP HIM TOGETHER.

He might not help me, but...

He might not believe me when I say this.

But... I want him to help me.

UM, YOU SEE...

NAHO.

IT'S ALRIGHT.

DON'T WORRY.

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YOU GOT ONE, RIGHT?

A LETTER.

...YEAH.

I GOT ONE.

FROM MYSELF.

TO BE CONTINUED IN ISSUE 12 OF BETSUMA, WHICH COMES OUT NOV. 13TH IN JAPAN!

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Orange HOLDING A CHRISTMAS FAIR!!

page2

WHERE KAKERU GAVE NAHO HER HAIR CLIP.

JOYAMA PARK MAP 1

In 1872 (5th year of Meiji), this was Matsumoto's first park.
You can see all of Matsumoto from the observation deck.
The cherry blossoms are beautiful too, it's perfect for flower viewing.
住所 長野県松本市城山2-19 TEL 0263-34-3254（松本市公園緑地課）

↑ You can see 360 degrees at the lookout. In another direction, you can see the Japanese Alps.

← Kakeru gave Naho her hair clip at the top of this lookout point. Naho was really touched. ♪

HOW ABOUT A WALK IN MATSUMOTO FOR CHRISTMAS? ♪

IT WAS REALLY POPULAR LAST TIME, SO WE'LL GO DEEP INTO MATSUMOTO. LET'S GO WITH NAHO AND EVERYONE!

NAHO AND EVERYONE'S FAVORITE SPOT?!

KAZUKAZU BRIDGE

Take a break on the bridge that crosses the Metoba River. The views are impressive.

TAIYAKI FURUGATO

The taiyaki shop denatured at the opening of chapter 3. The ones with red bean paste are delicious. They have other fillings as well.

www.taiyaki-ya.com

YOHASHIRO SHRINE

A shrine North of Nawate Street. Called, "The shrine that will grant your wishes" in chapter 7.

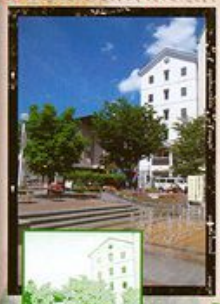
MAP 2 NAWATE STREET

A recreation of an Edo era shopping street along the Metoba River. An abundant amount of cute goods are here.

OLD FAVORITE OF ORANGE FANS?

AGATA FOREST PARK MAP 3

The park at 3rd Street in Matsumoto. It preserves the buildings of a pre-war Matsumoto high school. This is where Kakeru confided in Naho about his regrets regarding his Mom in chapter 7. It's a rich, green place to relax.



PERFECT PLACE TO WAIT.

FLOWER CLOCK PARK MAP 4

In the heart of Matsumoto, surrounded by PARCO and restaurants! Kakeru and Naho meet up here in Chapter 8.

MAP

"A LETTER."

"YOU GOT ONE, RIGHT?"

"SUWA GOT A LETTER TOO."

When I heard Suwa say that,

Was all I could think.

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【オレンジ】

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With you,
or without
you
there...

Even with that,
I have a scene
that I can
never forget.

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The days you were there and my future.
【オレンジ】

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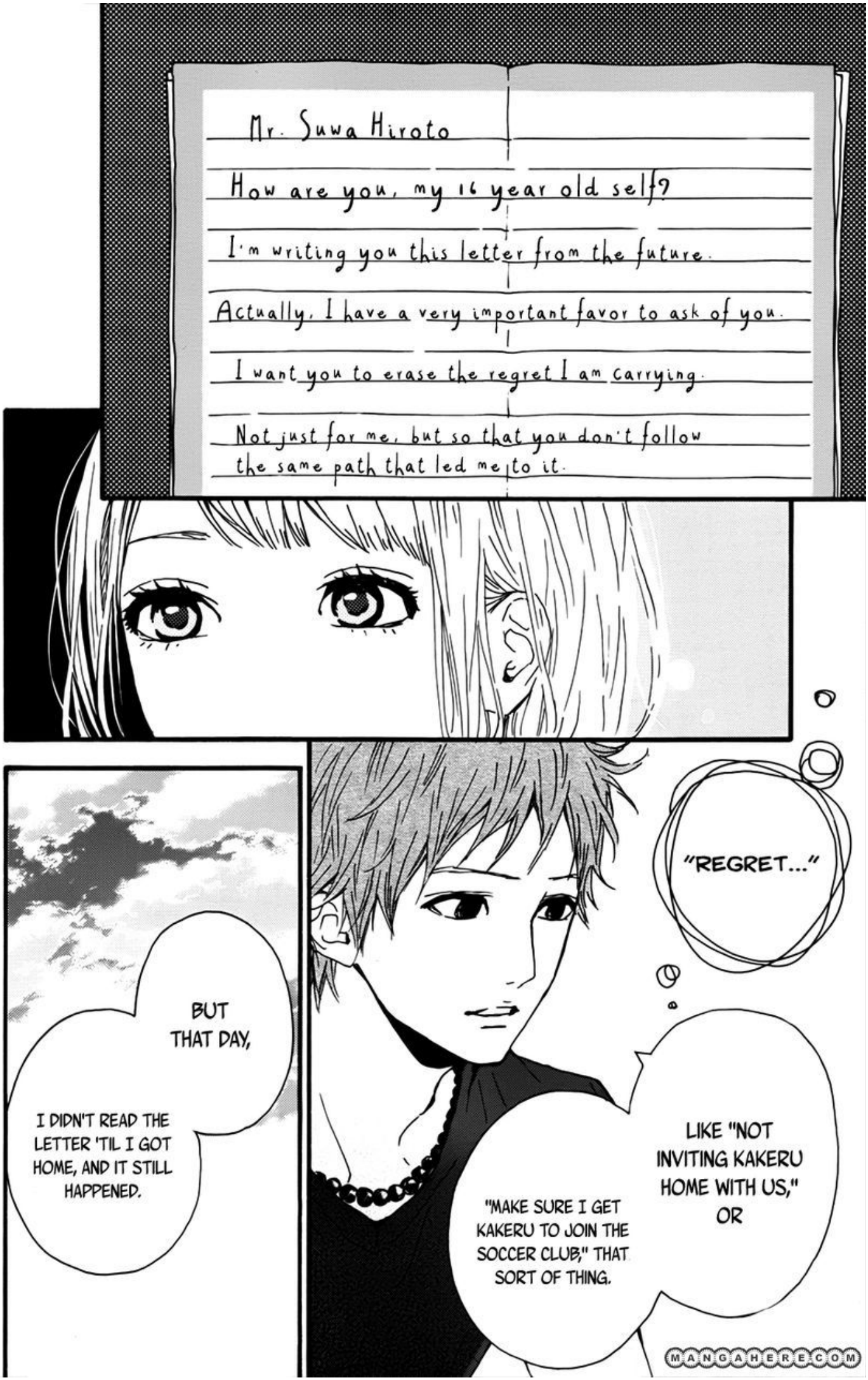

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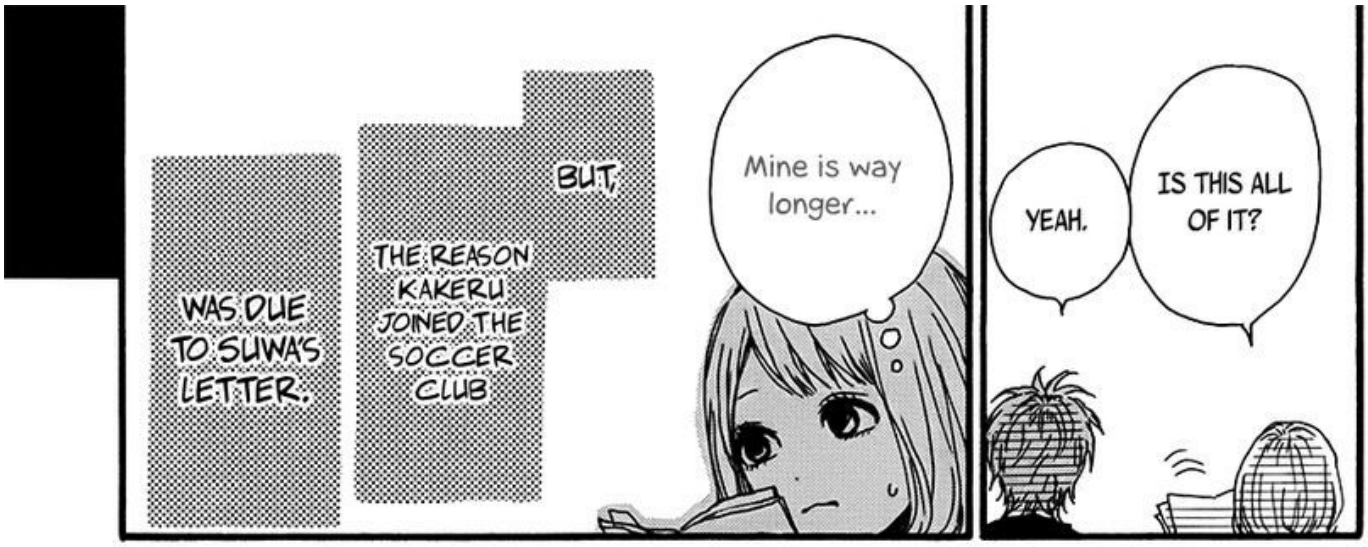

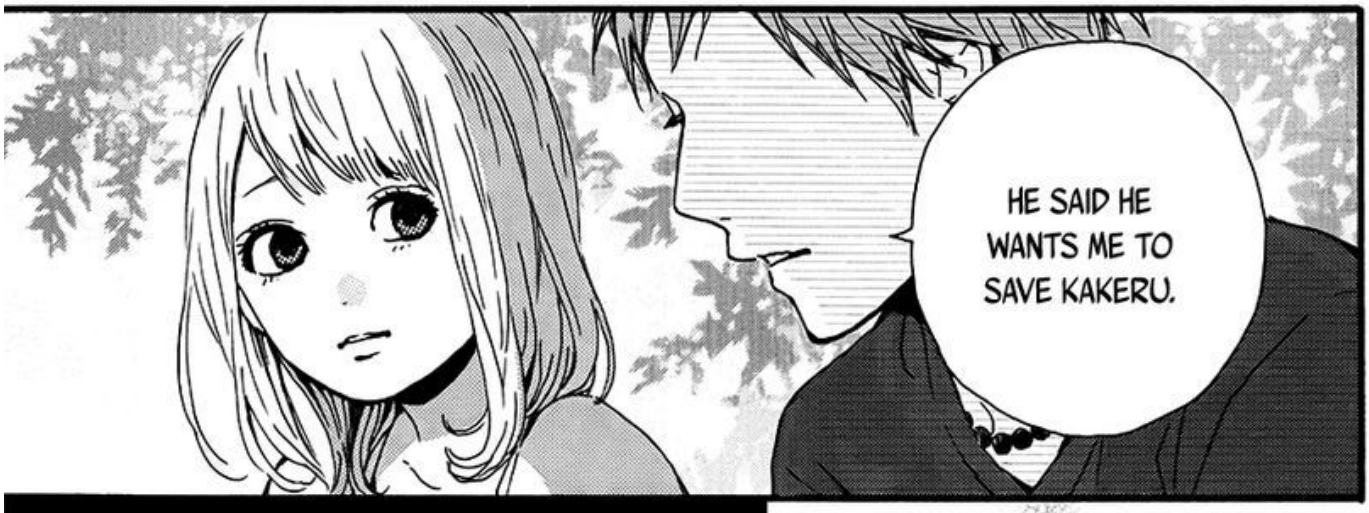

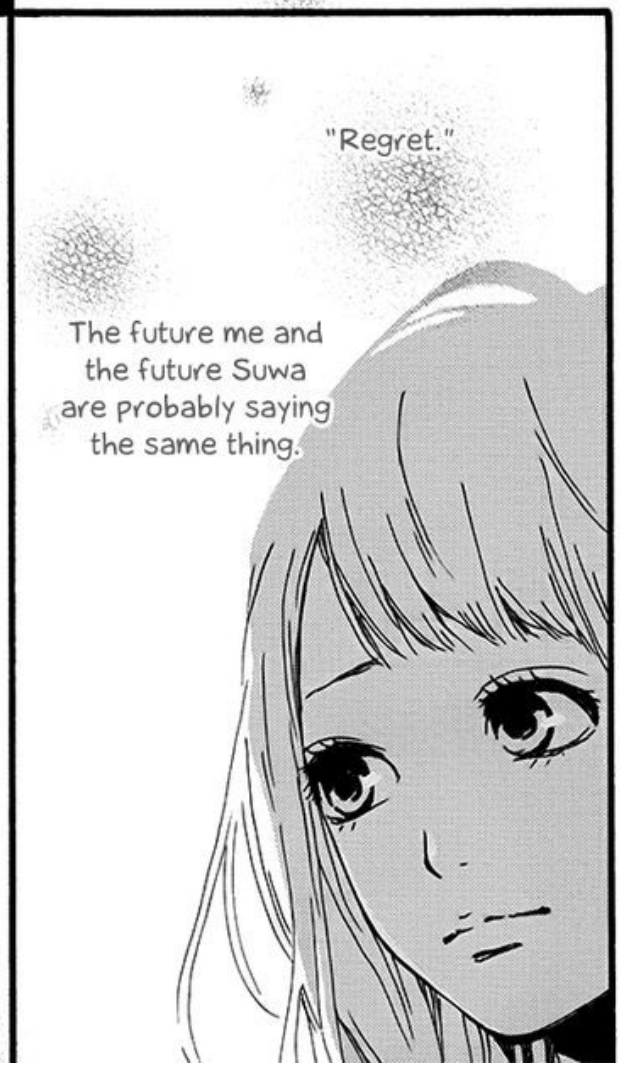

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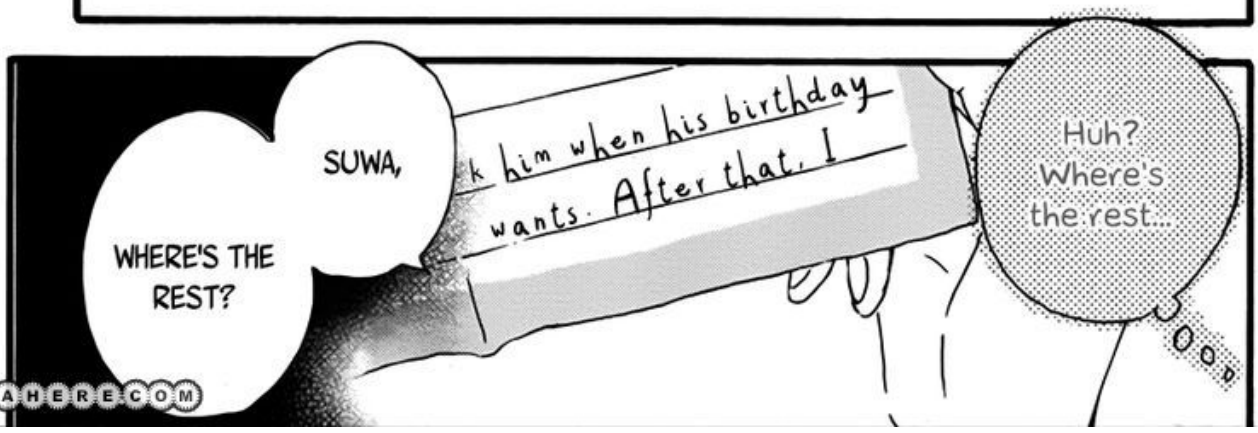
September 14th. This is Kakeru's birthday.

We didn't know 'til long afterwards 'cause Kakeru didn't tell us anything, so nobody knew about it. Thus, we said we would celebrate the next year, and asked what he wanted.
But in the end, we never celebrated his 18th birthday.
So before that day, ask him when his birthday is and what he wants.

After that, I



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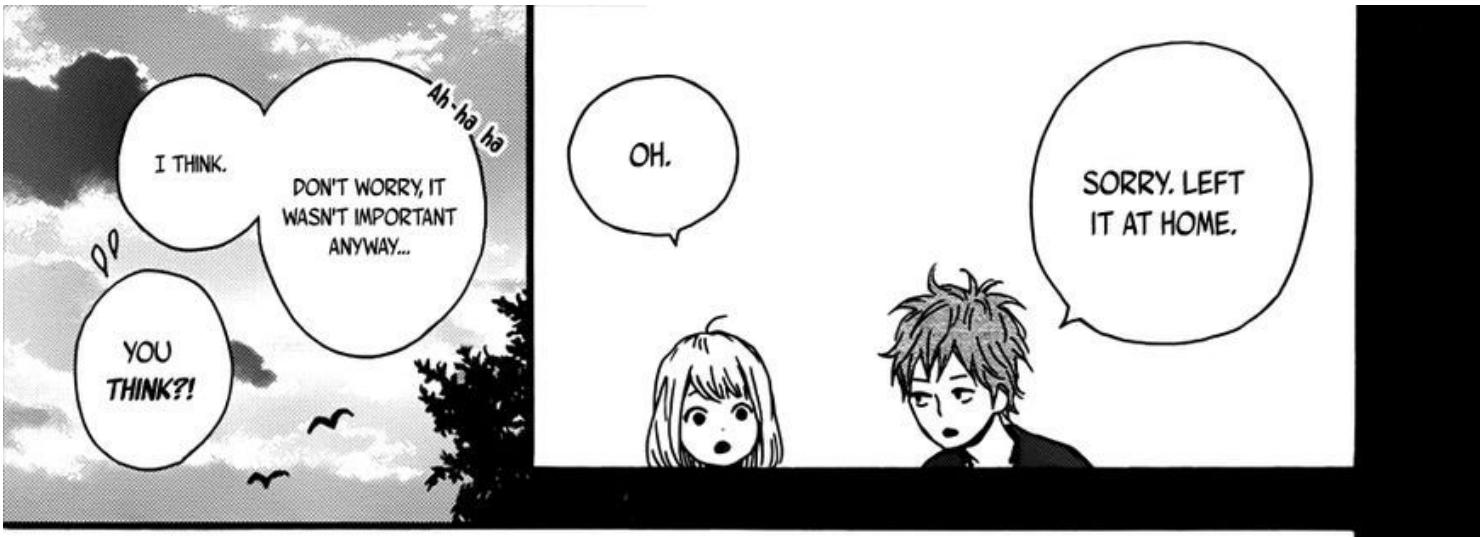

Kakeru's birthday...

The fact that Suwa also got a letter

This wasn't in my letter, but...

makes me happy and a little relieved.

Suwa is so strong to actually tell me.

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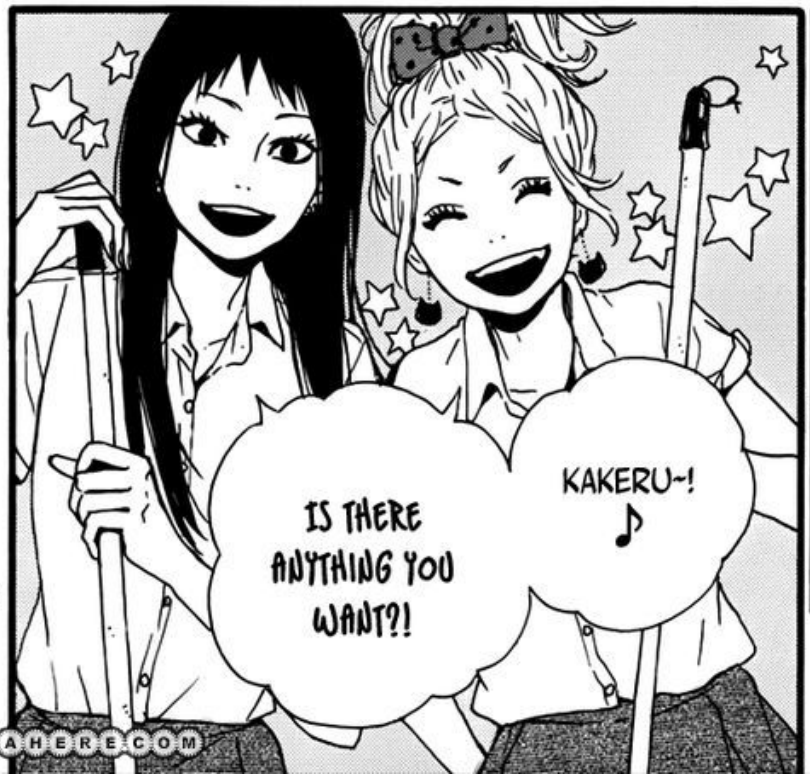

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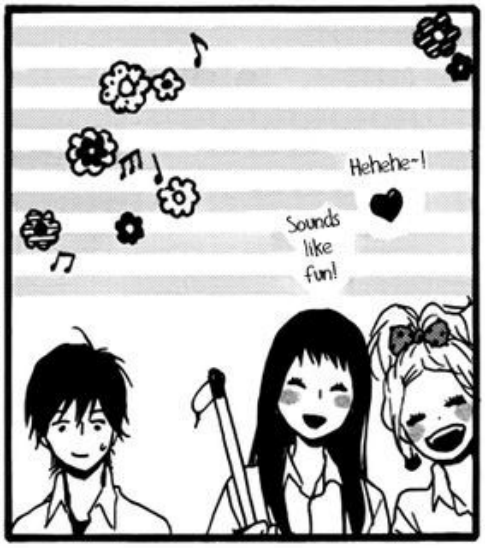
*T/N: Literally means the "Matsumoto Elegance." They're an actual professional team based in Matsumoto, Nagano.



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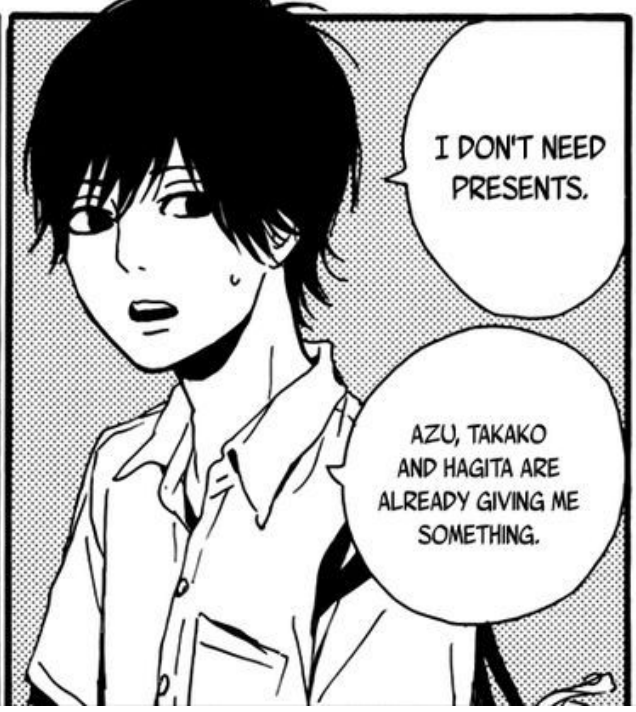

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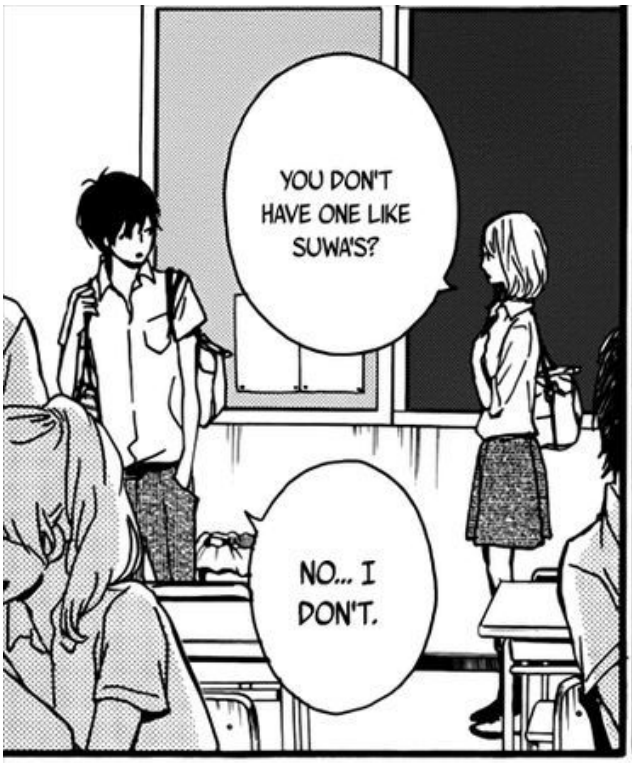

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*Kouhai = Junior

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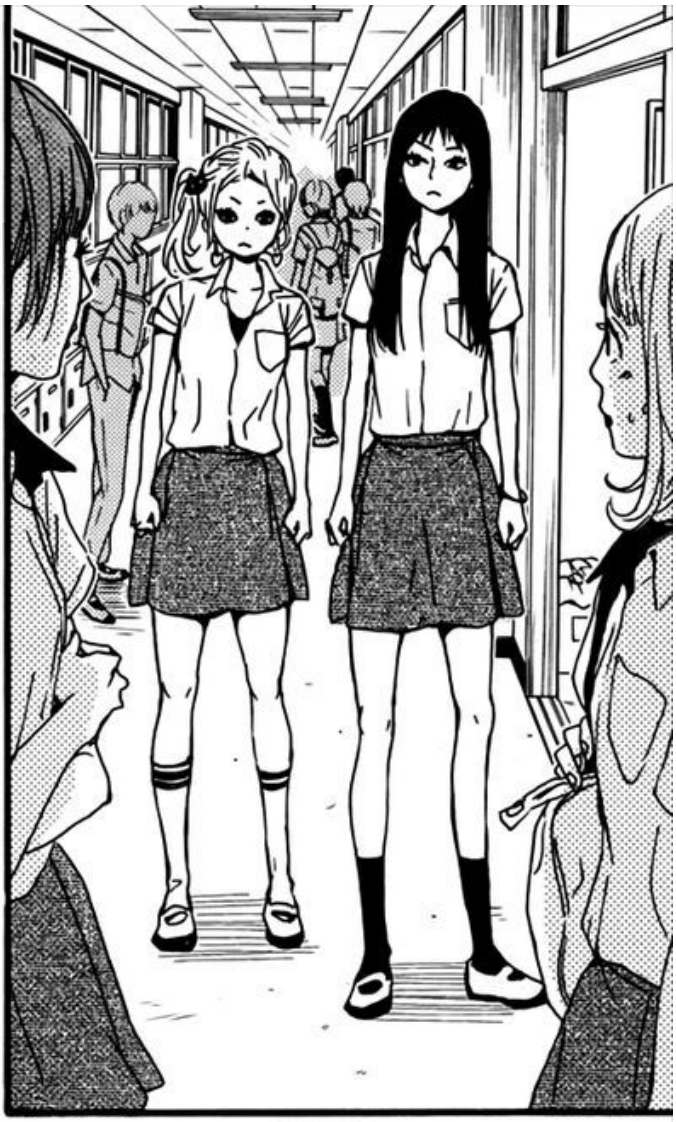

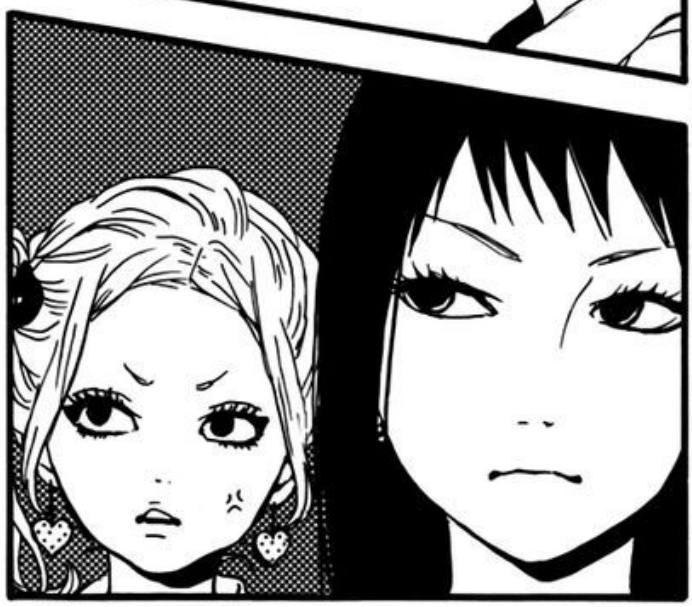

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WHATEVER, I DON'T CARE ABOUT KAKERU.

...YOU CAN JUST...

STOP THAT...

.....

THEN DISAPPEAR.

DON'T WANT ME TO?

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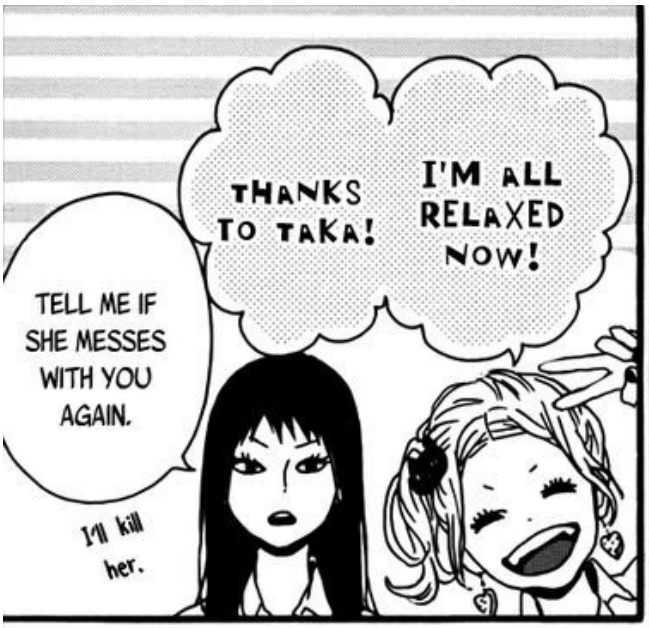

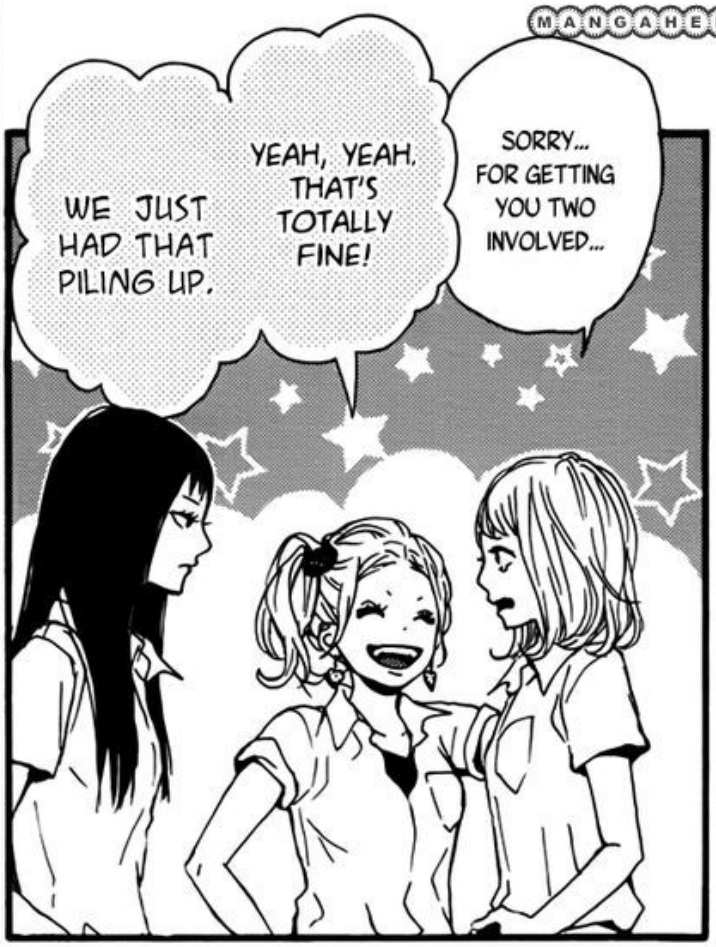

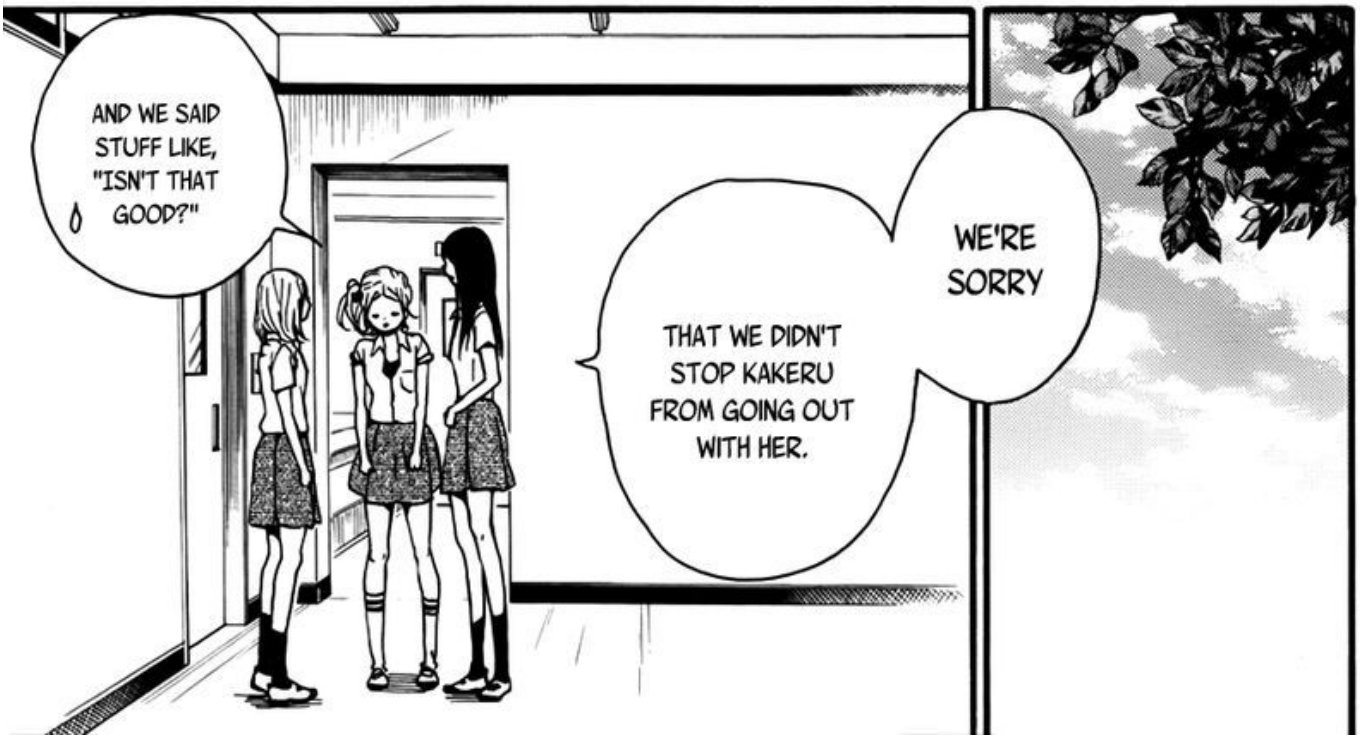

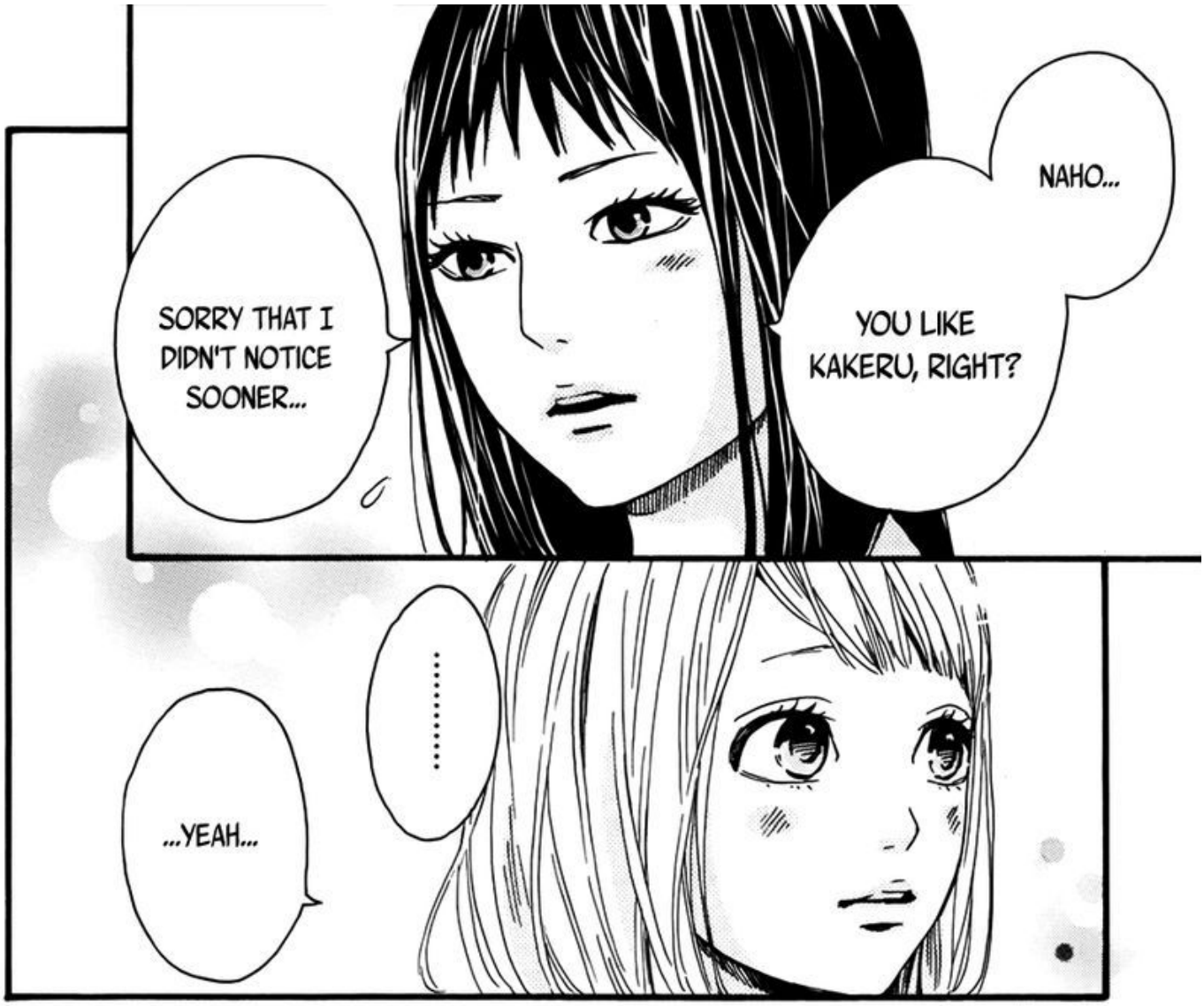

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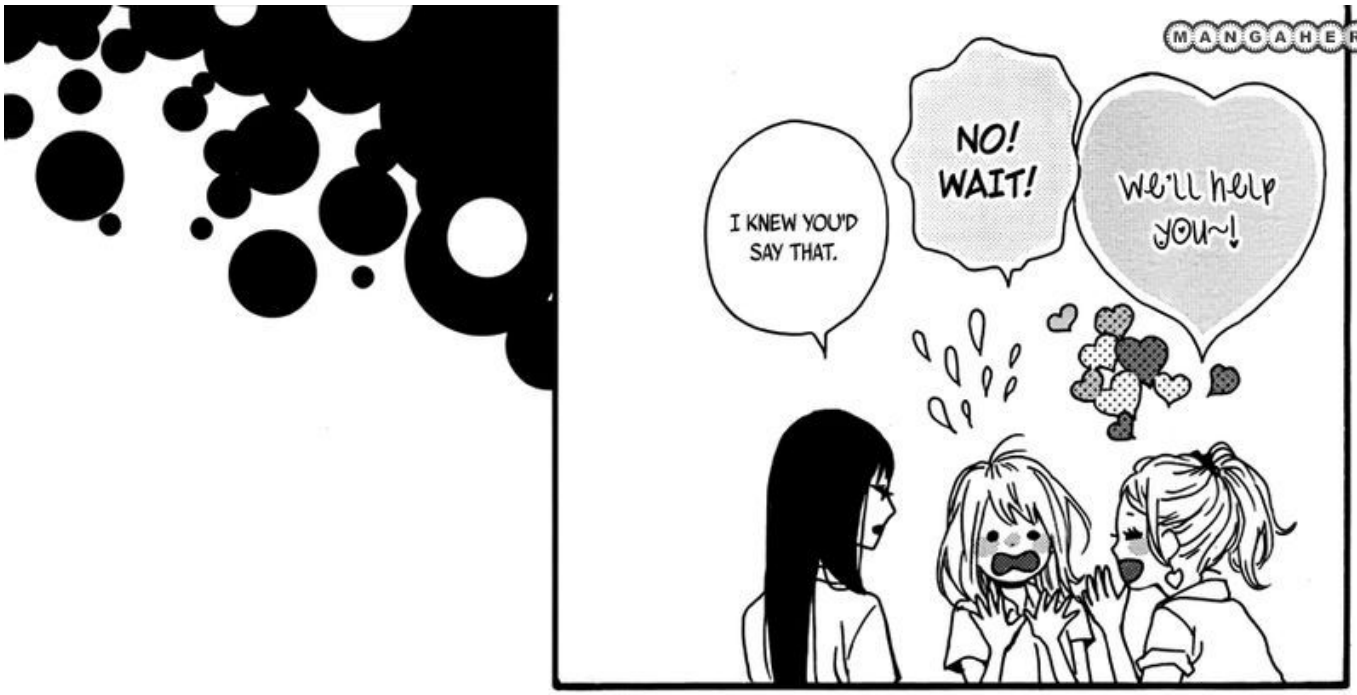

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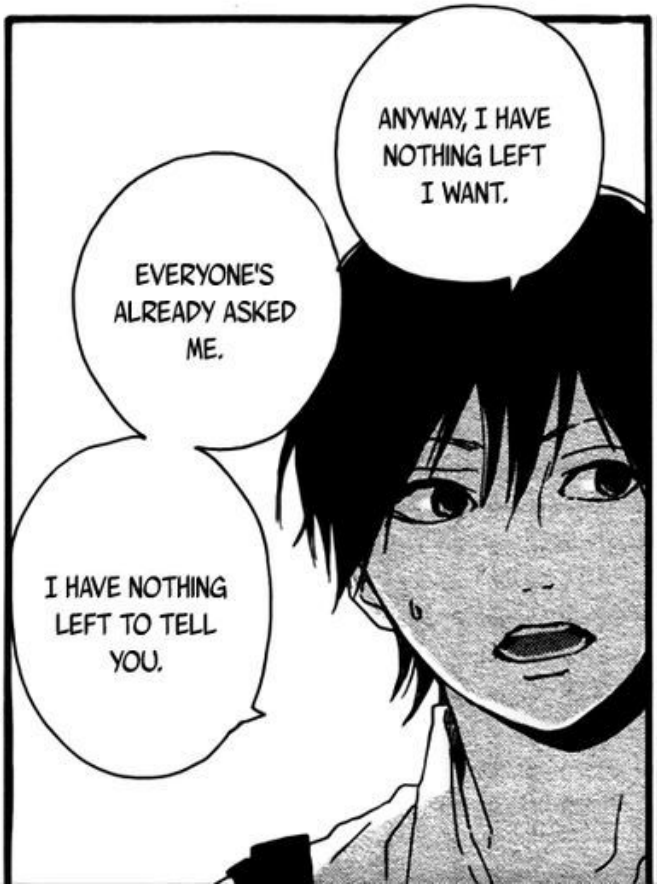

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ALREADY DONE.

A SPORTS BAG FOR CLUB?

ALREADY DONE.

TICKETS TO A YAMAGA GAME?

YOU SAY THAT, BUT...

Let me think...

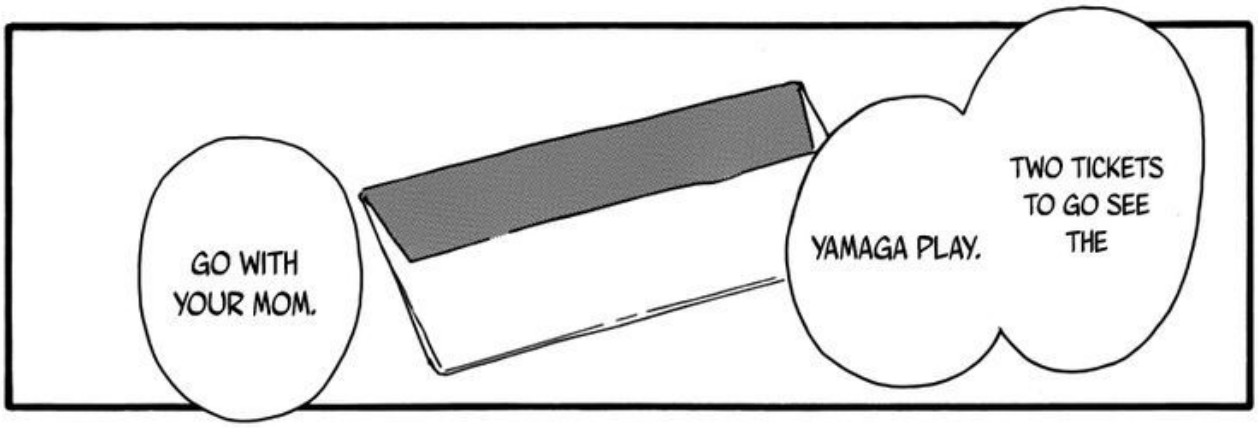
THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING...

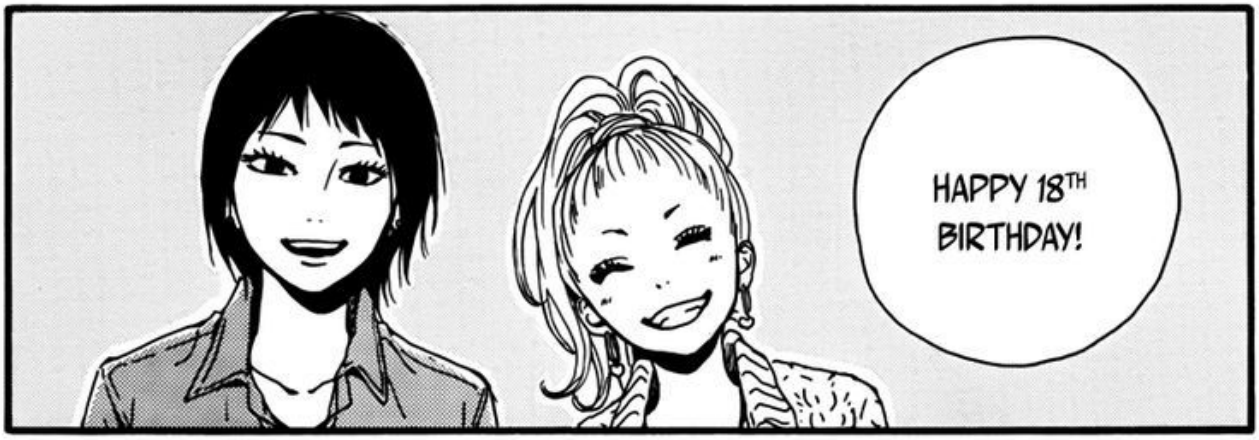
COME ON, MAN.

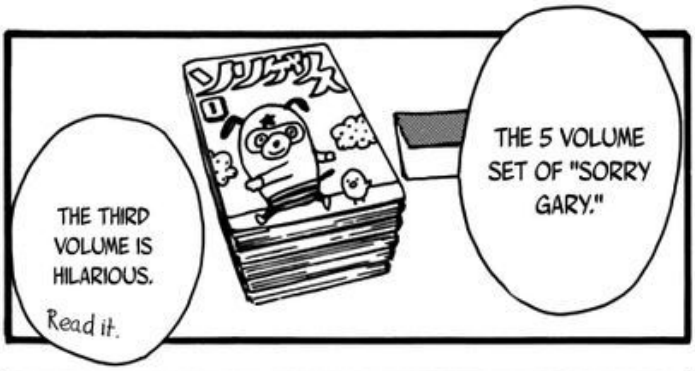
YEAH, IT'S OKAY.

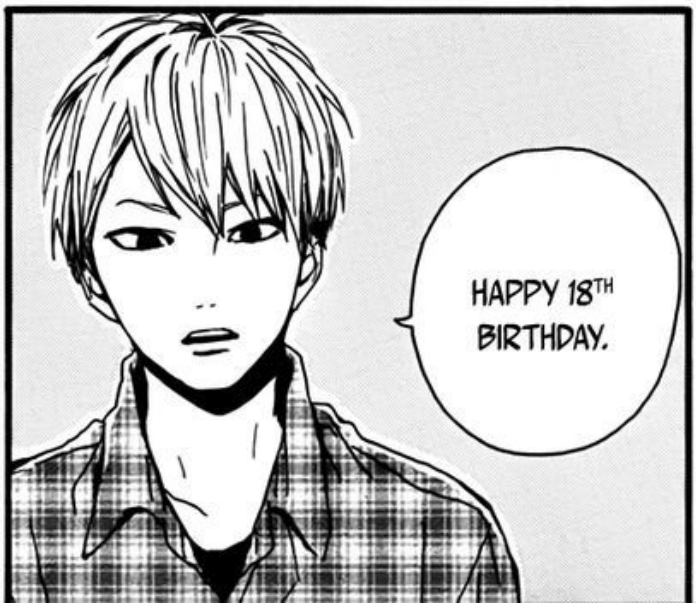
...A BOUQUET? SERIOUSLY?

ALRIGHT, I'LL TAKE A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS.









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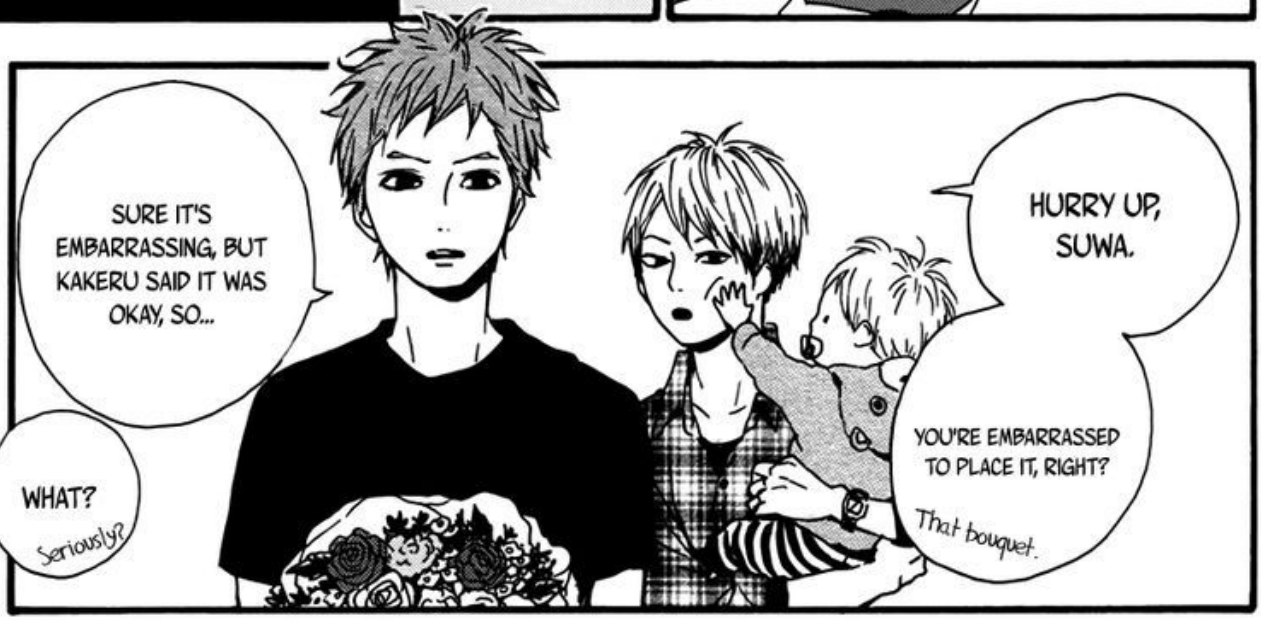

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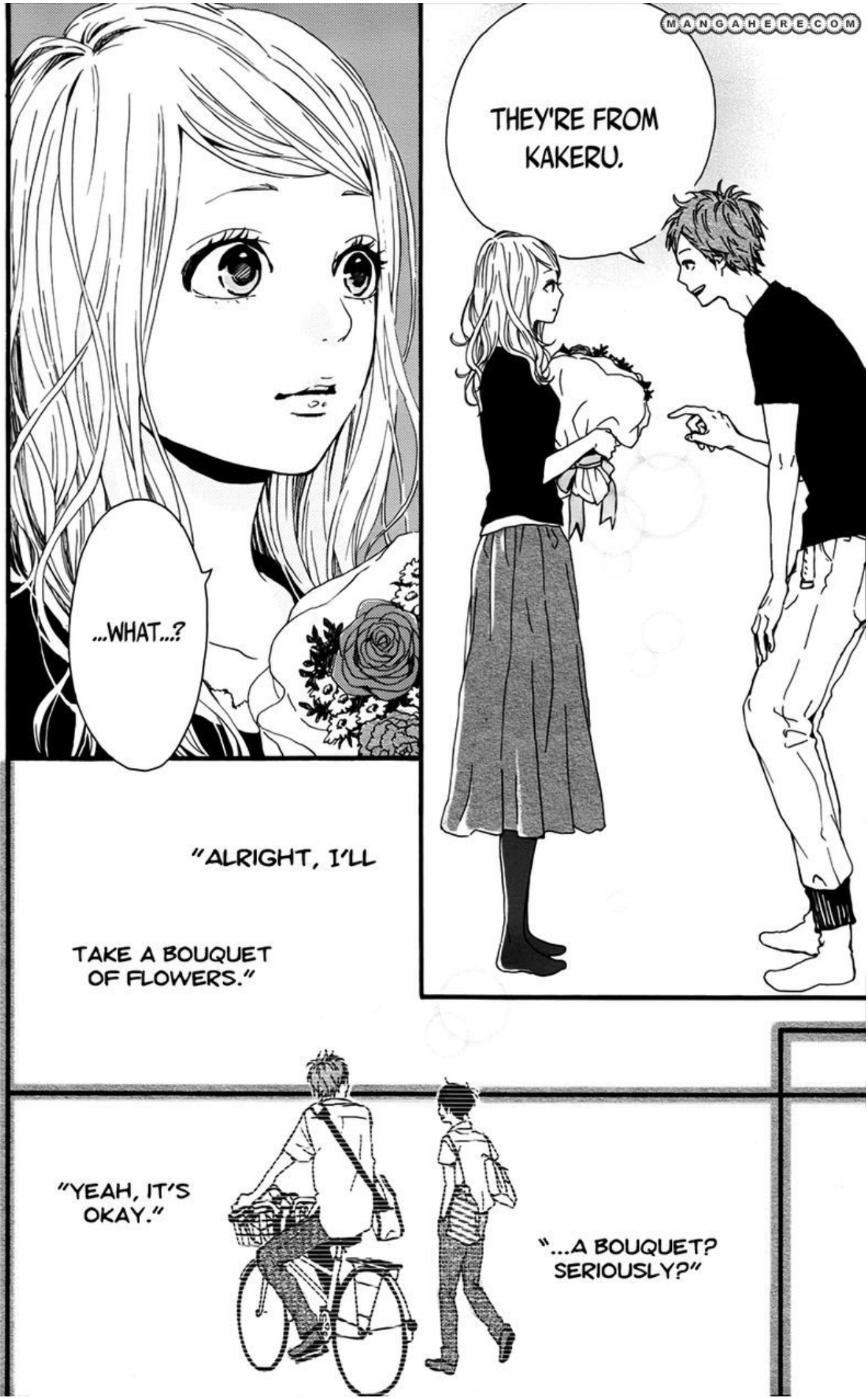

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"I'LL GET THEM,

AND THEN GIVE THEM TO NAHO."

"I'M KIDDING!"

ha ha

AREN'T THEY SUPPOSED TO BE FOR YOU?!"

"HAA?

...IS WHAT KAKERU TOLD ME.

...BUT WHY...

FOR ME?

COME ON, NOW.

"WHY?"

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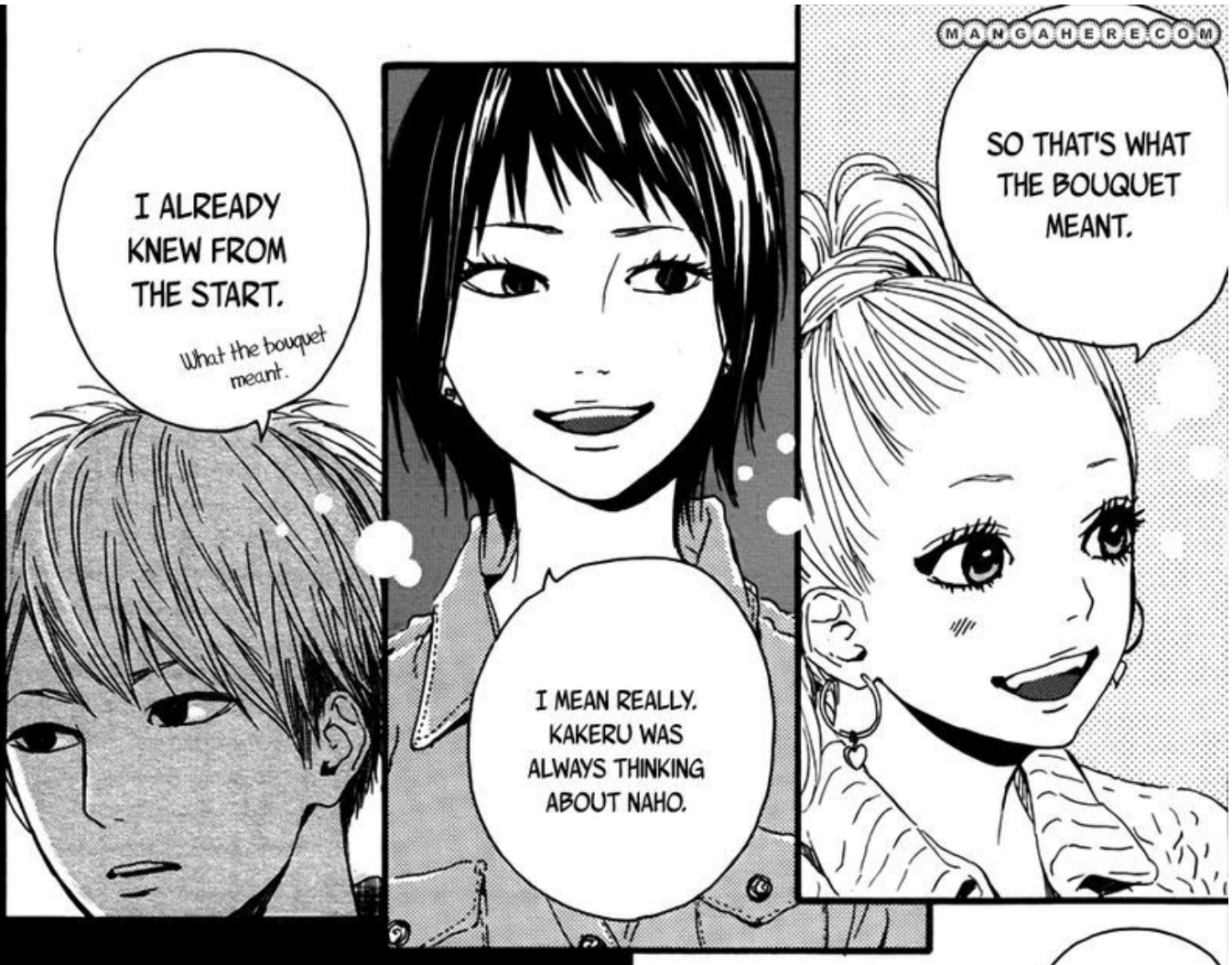

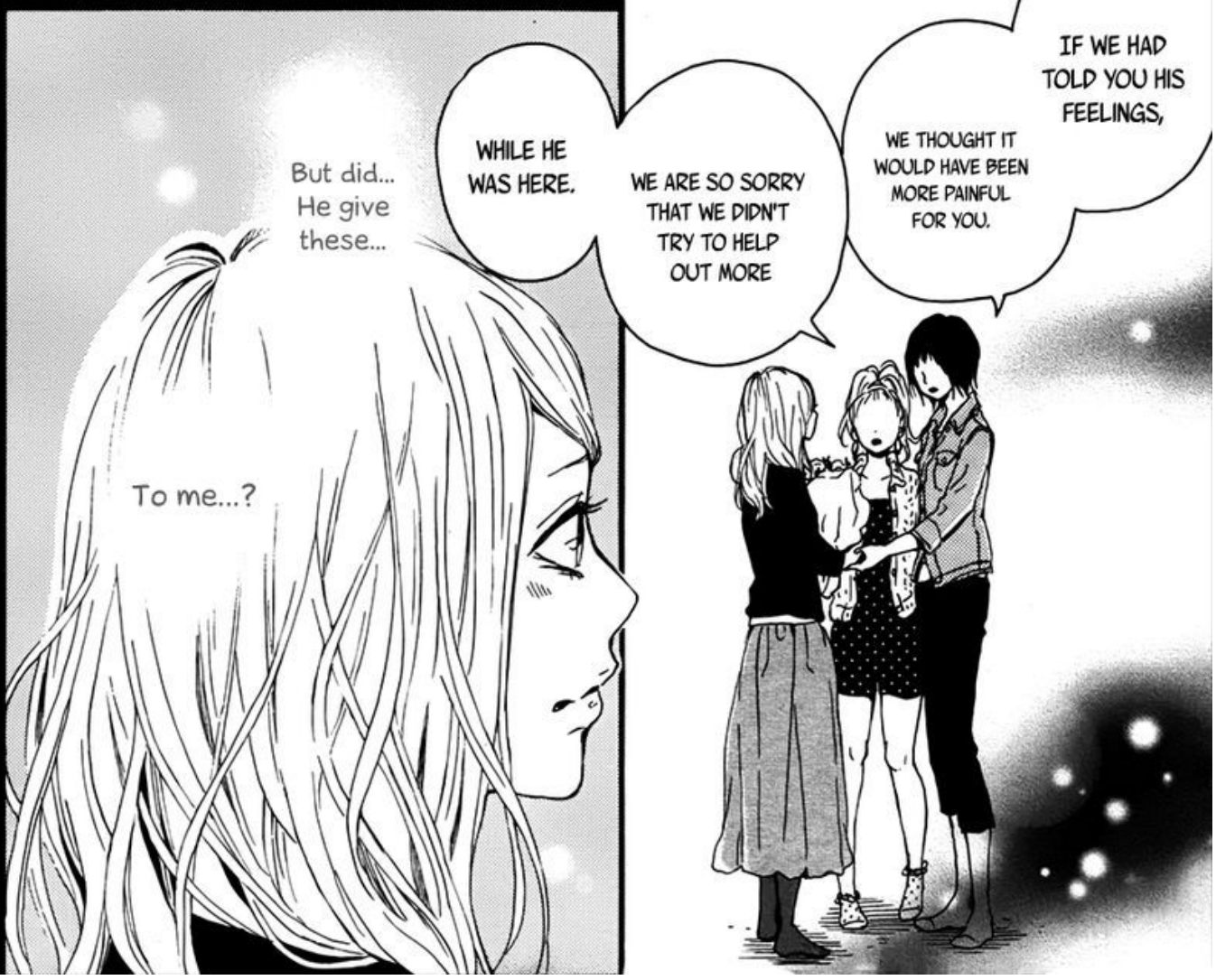

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BUT, I GOT A BOUQUET FROM HIM.

KAKERU'S NO LONGER HERE,

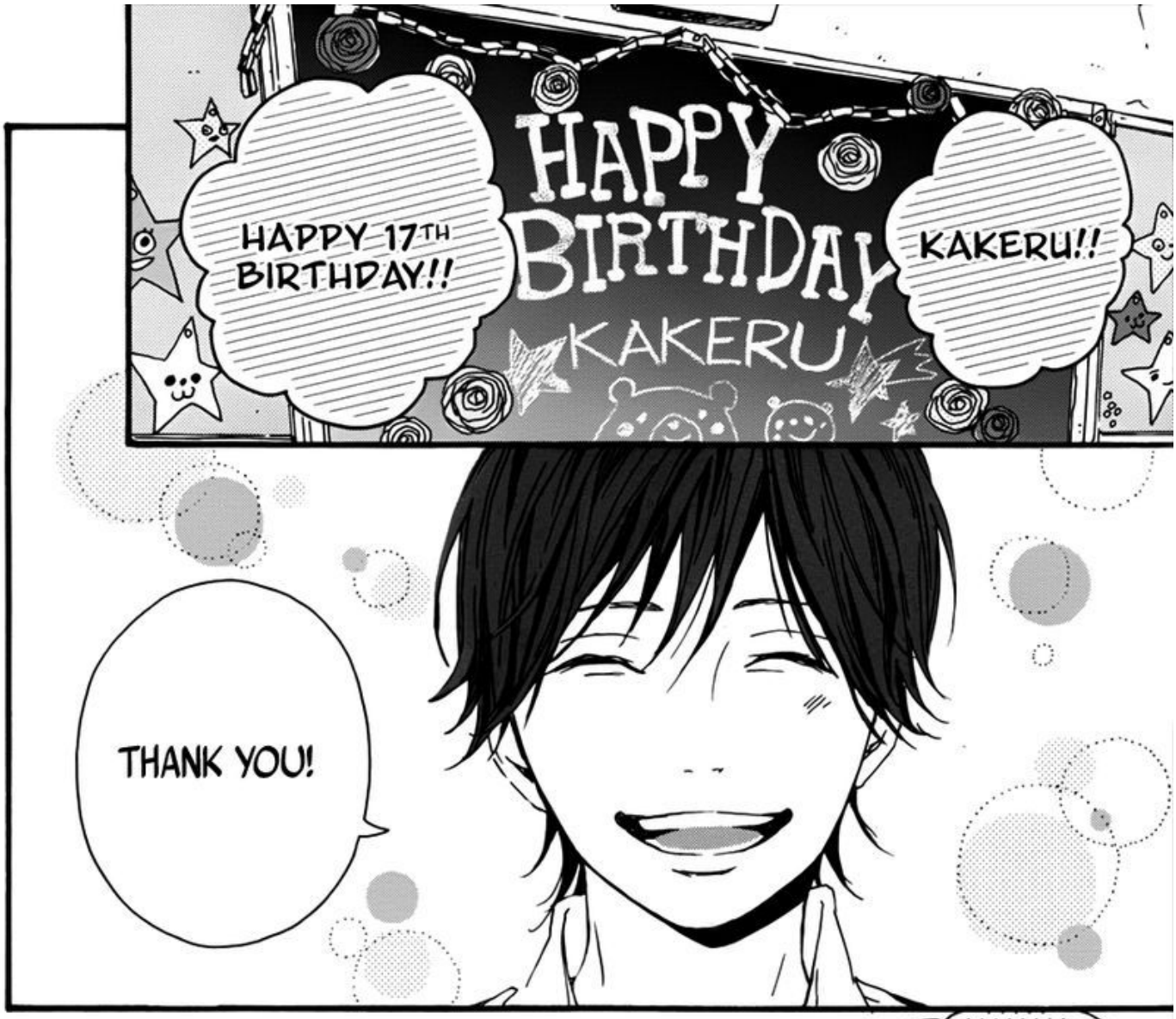
AND I CAN NO LONGER ASK HIM ABOUT IT.

Kakeru...

If he were here, what would he say?

THAT THE OTHER ME CAN DO WHAT I WROTE.

I'M SURE



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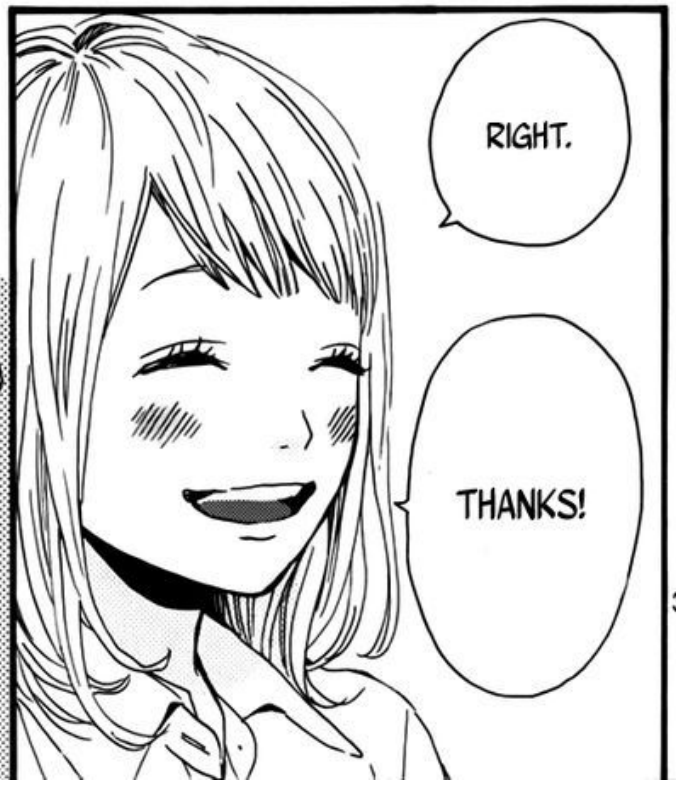

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September 14th.

It's Kakeru's birthday.

Make sure to

Actually ask him what

He wants for his birthday.

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And I

Want you to give your present last.
I think he'll tell you he wants a bouquet.
Ask him why.

So, you have to give him a bouquet. You have to.

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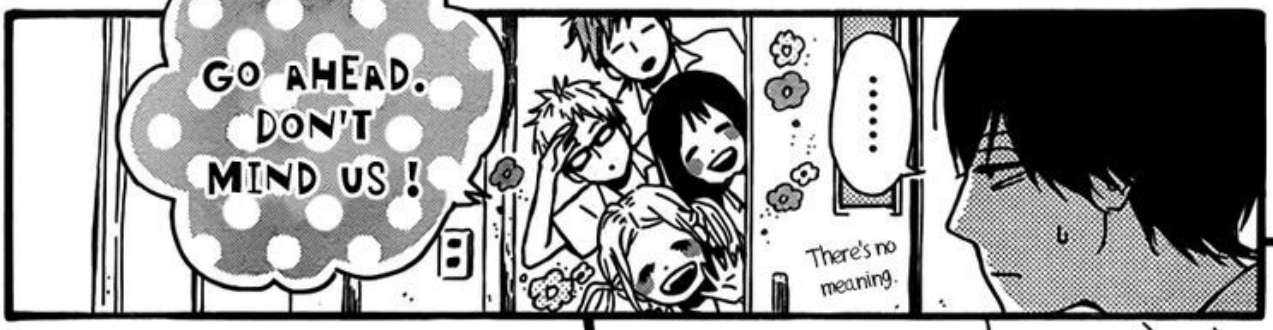

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Back then, I

Couldn't really support Kakeru and Naho together.

But after Kakeru died, Naho would just sit there and cry.

I always regretted not being able
to see the two of them get together.

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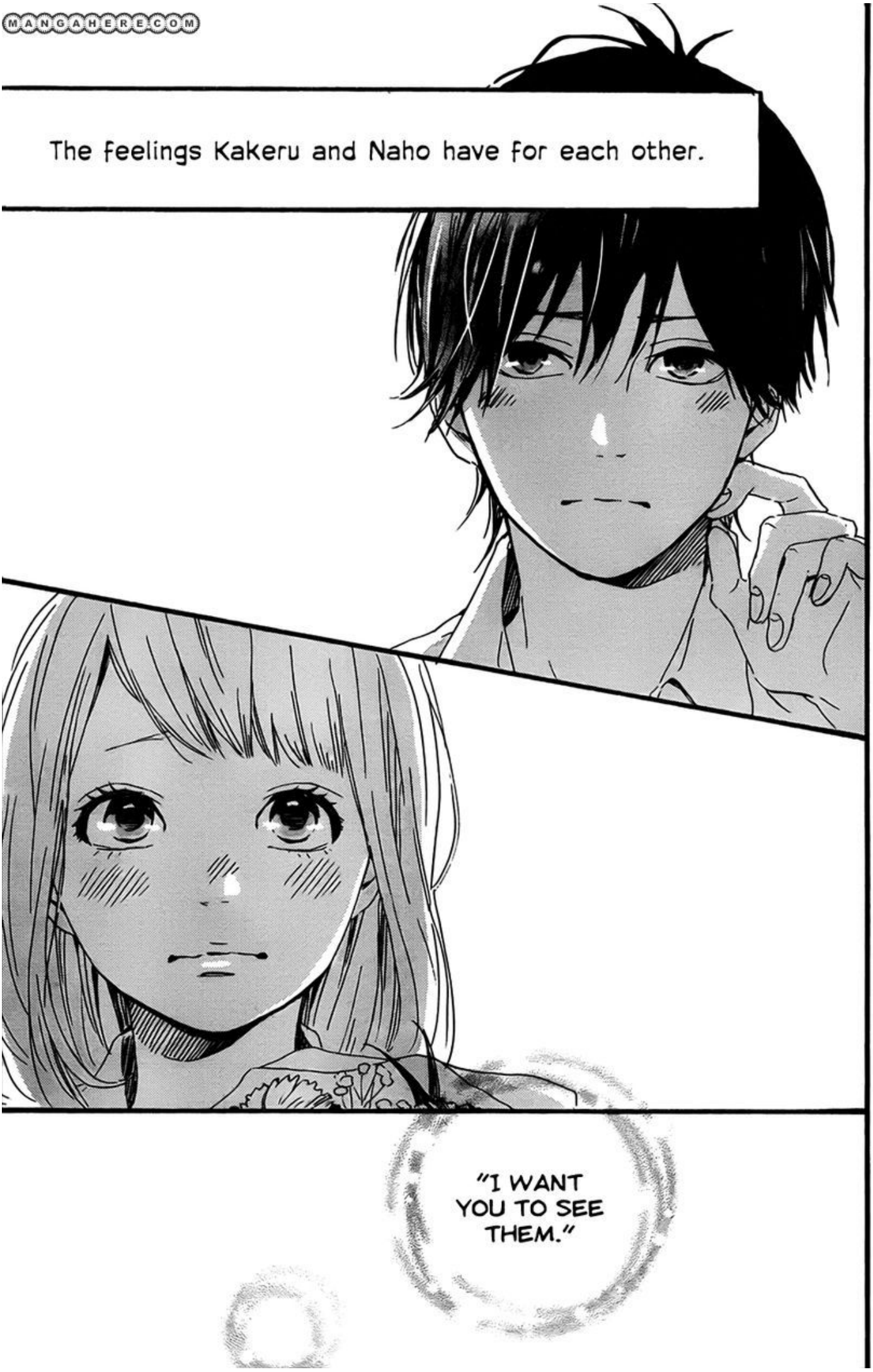

So that we can see

Naho and Kakeru smiling together ten years in the future.

I leave them to you.

TO BE CONTINUED IN ISSUE 2 OF BETSUMA, WHICH COMES OUT JAN. 13TH IN JAPAN!

※NO ORANGE CHAPTER NEXT MONTH (DEC.)! SEE YOU IN THE FEBRUARY (JAN.) ISSUE!

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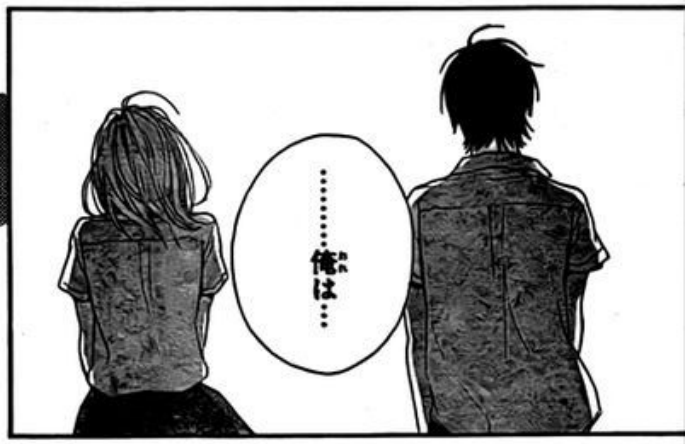
高野苺の最新MC



『未来を変えるには
きっと今までの自分を変える事』

orange 【オレンジ】 no. 2

「翔がいない未来」を変えようと、手紙の指示を実行していく菜穂。しかし、未来と現在は別世界(パラレルワールド)かもしれないと知ります。
さらに手紙と現実の出来事に食い違いが増えて…。

2巻発売記念
プレゼント企画もあるよ♪
詳しくは7Pに!!

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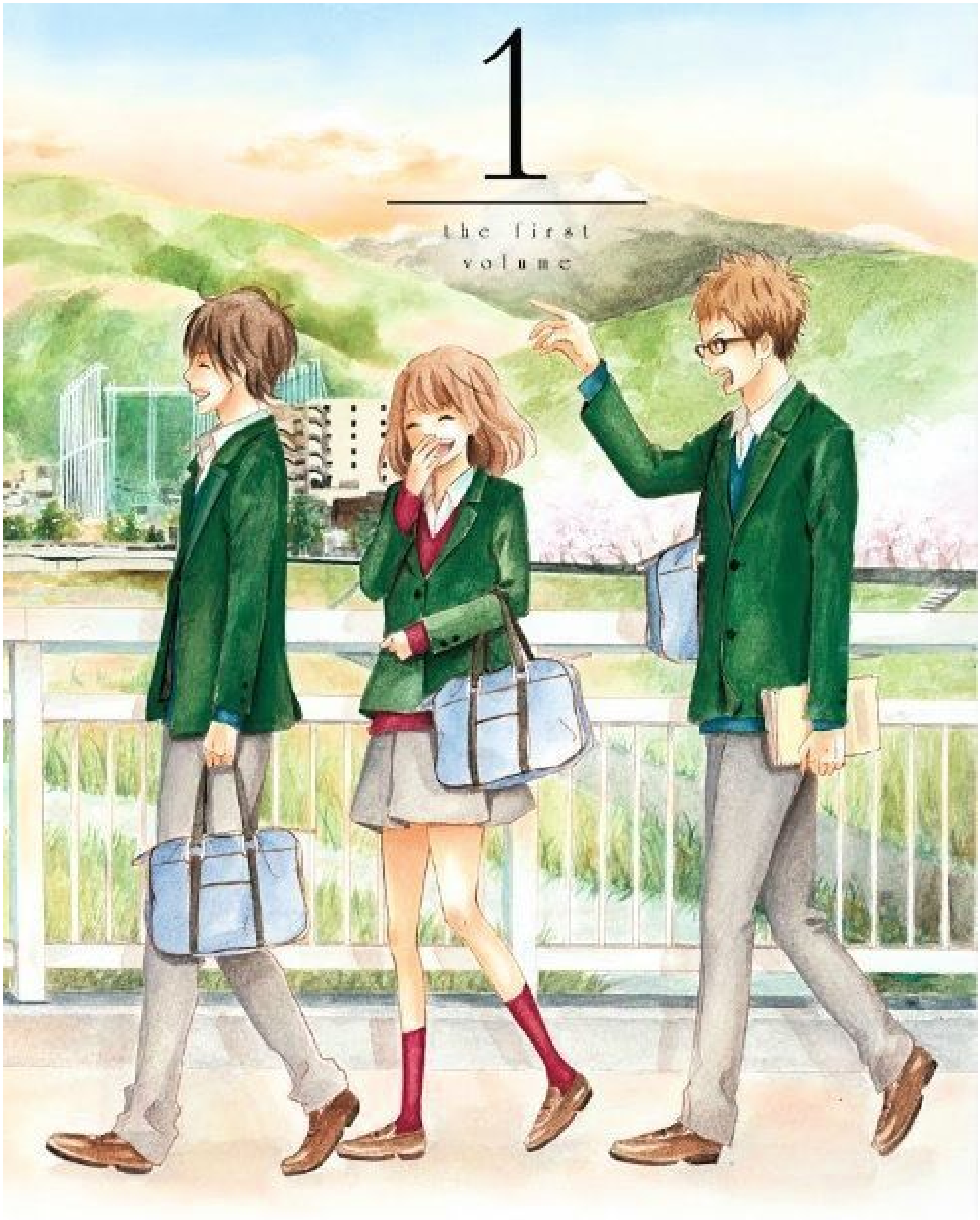
Chapter 9: Letter 9

Please purchase Takano Ichigo's other series and Orange. on sale now!



orange

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ACTION COMICS

published by FUTABASHA

I HOPE YOU REALIZE...
...HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU.
I...

EPISODE 10

...SHARED HIS FEELINGS WITH ME.
KAKERU...

YOU DON'T...
...HAVE TO ANSWER!
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU HOW I FELT...
AN ANSWER...
OKAY...

I FEEL...
HOT...
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT...
MY ANSWER IS OBVIOUS.
...THE SAME WAY ABOUT HIM.
MORNIN'!

AH...
MY PRESENT...
AH!
THANKS FOR USING THE BAG!

YOU'RE NOT GONNA ANSWER HIM?
EXACTLY THE SAME.
HUH?
??
HEY, GET OUTTA HERE!
AREN'T YOU GONNA ANSWER HIM?
SO?
I CAME TO HELP.
IF YOU'VE COME TO GET IN THE WAY, GO HOME!

JUST TELL HIM EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL!
AFTER ALL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
HA HA HA
THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU, NAHO!
EXACTLY?
IF I ANSWER HIM...
...MAYBE IT WOULD BOTHER HIM...
PFFT
Huh?

NAHO...

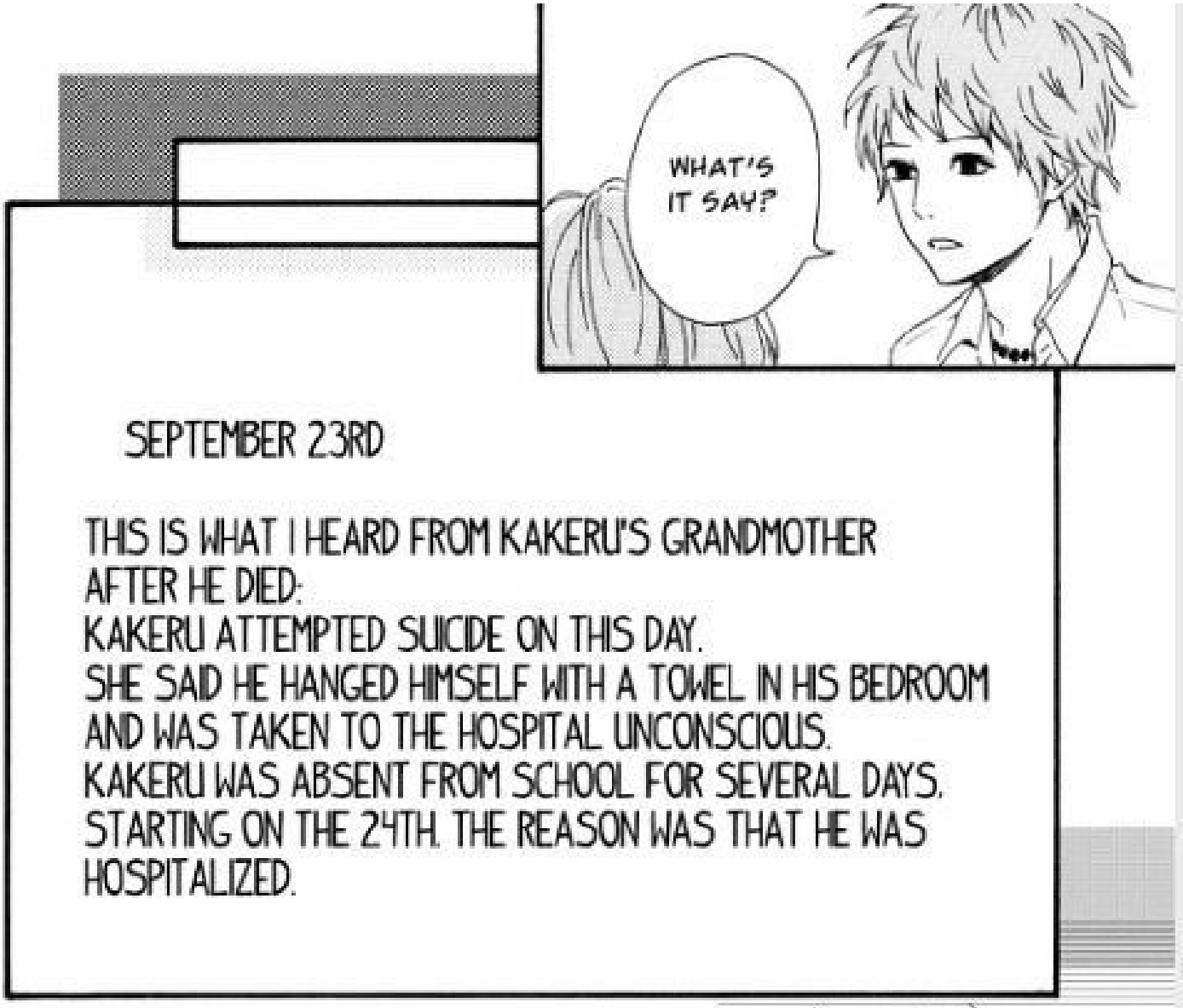
JUST MAKE SURE...
CUT IT OUT.
...YOU DO ANSWER HIM.

NAHO, REALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT.
DON'T BULLY HER.
FAP
I'LL BE HAPPY IF YOU TREAT ME LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS TREATED ME.
WOW! TALK ABOUT PUTTING UP A FRONT...
SHUT UP AZU.
I WONDER...
...WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT?
LET'S GO, SUWA.
WELL, I'LL CARRY THIS.
YEAH, YEAH.
PING PONG

NAHO!
!
KAKERU SAID...
?
...THAT HAIRSTYLE IS CUTE!
WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!
HUH? YES, YOU DID. I HEARD YOU.
HAGITA-KUN! WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

CHIRP ミーン
CHIRP ミンミン
CHIRP ミーン
I WONDER WHAT KAKERU WOULD THINK...
...IF I DID TELL HIM HOW I FELT...
SUWA, LET'S GO TO THE CLUB.
SORRY.
YOU GO ON AHEAD. I'LL BE THERE SOON.
OKAY. THEN I'LL SEE YOU THERE.
YEP.

NAHO!
CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?
HUH?
LISTEN...
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S IN YOUR LETTER TOO, BUT HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING FOR THE 23RD?
YOU MEAN SEPTEMBER 23RD?
YEAH.
LET ME SEE...
SORRY 'BOUT THIS...
IT'S OKAY.
THERE IS SOMETHING.
September 23rd
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE


WHAT'S IT SAY?
SEPTEMBER 23RD
THIS IS WHAT I HEARD FROM KAKERU'S GRANDMOTHER AFTER HE DIED:
KAKERU ATTEMPTED SUICIDE ON THIS DAY.
SHE SAID HE HANGED HIMSELF WITH A TOWEL IN HIS BEDROOM AND WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL UNCONSCIOUS.
KAKERU WAS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR SEVERAL DAYS, STARTING ON THE 24TH. THE REASON WAS THAT HE WAS HOSPITALIZED.

SUWA, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

ON THE OTHER HAND...
...IT'S POSSIBLE THAT SUICIDE STILL IS IN HIS FUTURE.
BUT THE WORLD OF THE LETTERS AND OUR WORLD ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
IT SAID THE SAME THING IN MY LETTER.
THE WAY OUR KAKERU IS NOW, MAYBE THERE IS NO ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN HIS FUTURE.

KAKERU...
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, AND FAST...
KAKERU...
IT'S OKAY. I'LL DO SOMETHING.
NAHO...

THE DAY BEFORE. KAKERU MET A FRIEND FROM HIS OLD SCHOOL.

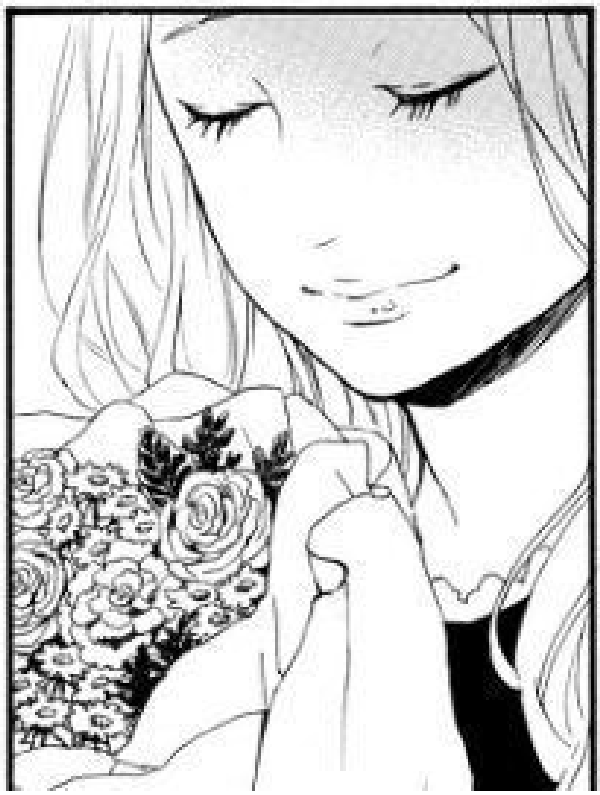
HE TOLD THE FRIEND ABOUT HIS MOTHER'S SUICIDE AND THAT HE WANTED TO DIE TOO, APPARENTLY.

BUT THE FRIEND THOUGHT HE WAS ONLY JOKING AND LAUGHED AT HIM.

I WANT YOU TWO TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT HIS FEELINGS.

IT WAS THE DAY BEFORE HE DIED.

THERE WAS A POINT WHEN I WAS ON THE VERGE OF TELLING KAKERU HOW I FELT ABOUT HIM.



YEAH...
YOU GONNA GIVE IT TO SOME-BODY?
AH!
IS THAT VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATE?

YEAH...

HUH...
TO A GUY THAT YOU LIKE?

OH.
I SEE...

RATTLE
RATTLE
THAT'LL BE ALL FOR TODAY.
BYE, NAHO.

DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOUR CHOCOLATE TO THAT GUY.
I COULDN'T DO IT...
I KNEW THAT NO MATTER HOW MANY CHANCES I WAS GIVEN, I JUST WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT.
JUST LIKE I WASN'T ABLE TO GIVE HIM THE LUNCH I'D MADE...
I COULDN'T GIVE IT TO HIM.
...BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT KAKERU WOULD THINK OF ME.

...LIKE SUPER-MAN.
I WAS THINKING THAT AFTER THIS, MAYBE I'LL JUMP OUT THAT WINDOW AND FLY AWAY...
OH...
...
?
WHAT'S THE "WHOOSH" FOR?
WHOOSH...

YOU TAKE EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY, NAHO! I'M TALKING DAY-DREAMS!
HA HA
BUT YOU CAN'T FLY, KAKERU.

IF I WERE SUPERMAN...
...MAYBE I WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE MY MOTHER.

...IS ACTING A LITTLE WEIRD RIGHT NOW.
I'M KIDDING.
OH, YEAH.
KAKERU...
NO...
NEXT SATURDAY, I'M MEETING A FRIEND FROM TOKYO.
WHY NOT?
HUH?
DON'T!
...WHY NOT...?
ALTHOUGH IT'S JUST A GUY...
...NO!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO ANSWER THAT?
DON'T MEET HIM.

WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO US?
ESPECIALLY NOW, WHEN YOU GOT SOMETHIN' WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND...
HANG OUT WITH US INSTEAD.
WHAT THE...?
HUH? WHAT THE HELL? YOU TOO, SUWA?

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?
YOU HEARD FROM NAHO?
YEAH, SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M TALKING ABOUT YOUR MOTHER.
WELL, THERE'S NO WAY...
...I CAN TALK TO YOU GUYS ABOUT THAT.
I CONSIDER YOU GUYS CLOSE FRIENDS, SO WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER, I WANNA LAUGH.
IT'S EXACTLY BECAUSE WE'RE CLOSE FRIENDS THAT YOU SHOULD TALK TO US!

IF THINGS ARE ROUGH, SAY SO!
I'M POSITIVE THAT WE CAN HELP YOU.
WE DON'T WANNA LAUGH WHILE BEING IGNORANT ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOIN' THROUGH, KAKERU.
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT...
...THAT YOU WANTED TO DIE?

YEAH...
...I HAVE.
EVERY SINGLE DAY.
WHY...
...DO YOU THINK THAT?
IT'S ALL MY FAULT...
BECAUSE I BROKE THE PROMISE I MADE TO MY MOTHER ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.

"I KNEW THAT SHE REALLY NEEDED MY SUPPORT."
"I'M A TERRIBLE SON..."
...MY MOTHER DIED. IT'S MY FAULT.
BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS "A PAIN"...
I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO COMFORT HIM THEN.
WHY COULDN'T I HAVE SAID ANYTHING MORE TO PUT HIS MIND AT EASE?
BUT WHAT SHOULD I HAVE SAID?
IF I'D BEEN ABLE TO SAY SOMETHING TO HIM THEN...

MY MOM HASSLES ME EVERY DAY.
I GET NAGGED TO STUDY, TO CLEAN MY ROOM...
EVERYBODY THINKS STUFF LIKE THAT...
...IS "A PAIN."
"WHAT A PAIN" GOES THROUGH MY HEAD EVERY SINGLE DAY!
THAT'S ONLY NATURAL, KAKERU.

I...
BUT...
...IT'S DIFFERENT!
STOP FEELING REGRET.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

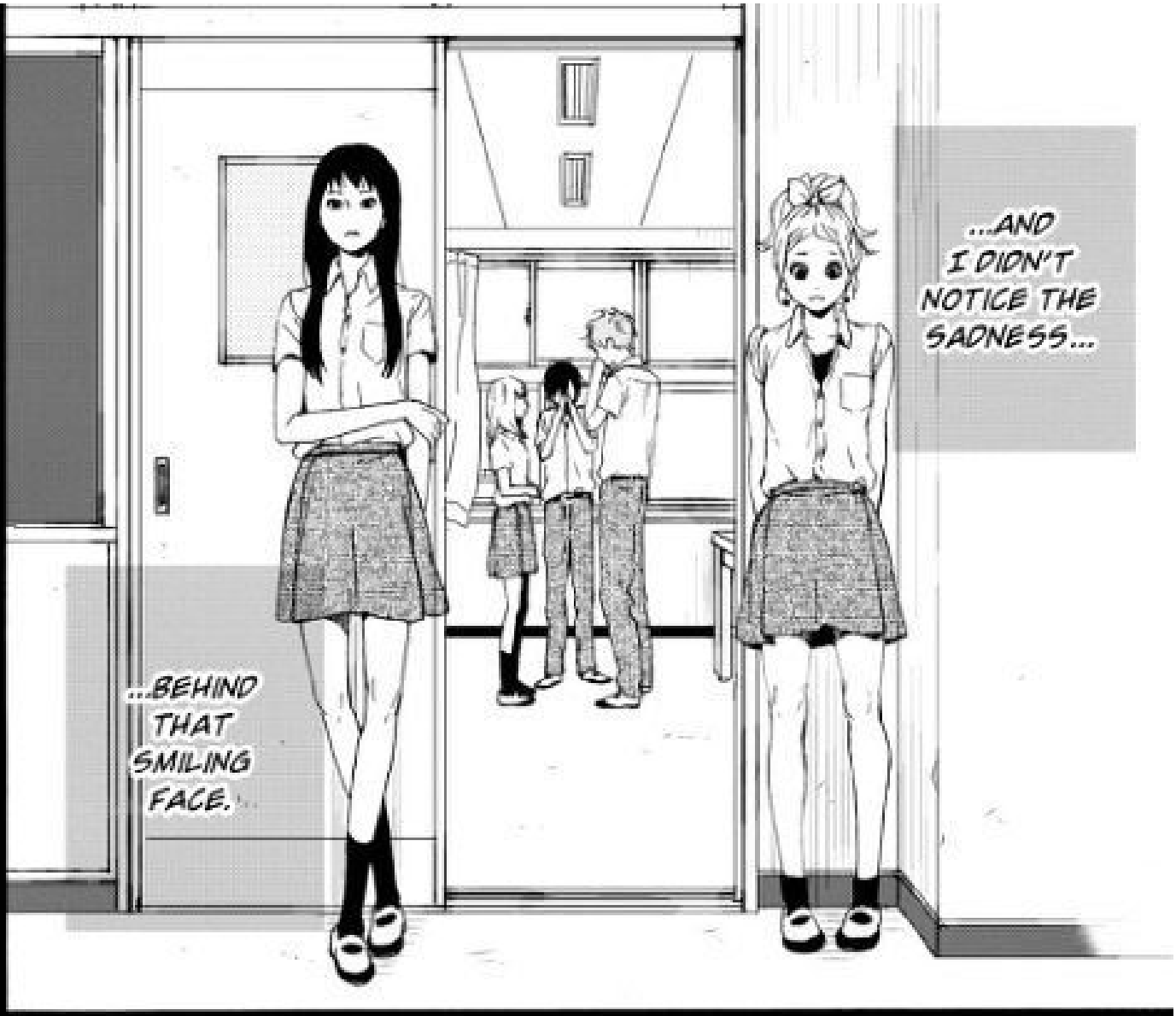
IT'S NOT ABOUT "WHAT WILL KAKERU THINK OF ME?"
I WANT HIM TO KNOW THAT HE'S NEEDED.
I JUST WANT HIM TO KNOW...
...HOW I FEEL.

I DON'T...
...WANT TO LOSE YOU.
KAKERU...
DON'T DIE.
I FEEL...
...THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOU.

I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU...
...SO WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GO AWAY!

I SAID...
...YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO ANSWER ME.
SUWA, ARE YOU CRYING?
OF COURSE NOT!
I have hay fever!
THANK YOU.

...IS ALWAYS SMILING.
KAKERU...
EVEN WHEN HE'S SAD...
...HE SMILES LIKE ALWAYS.
BUT WHAT DOES "ALWAYS" MEAN?
HE'S SMILED LIKE THAT SINCE I FIRST MET HIM...



..FOR REAL.

...I WANT TO SEE KAKERU SMILE...

SOMEDAY...

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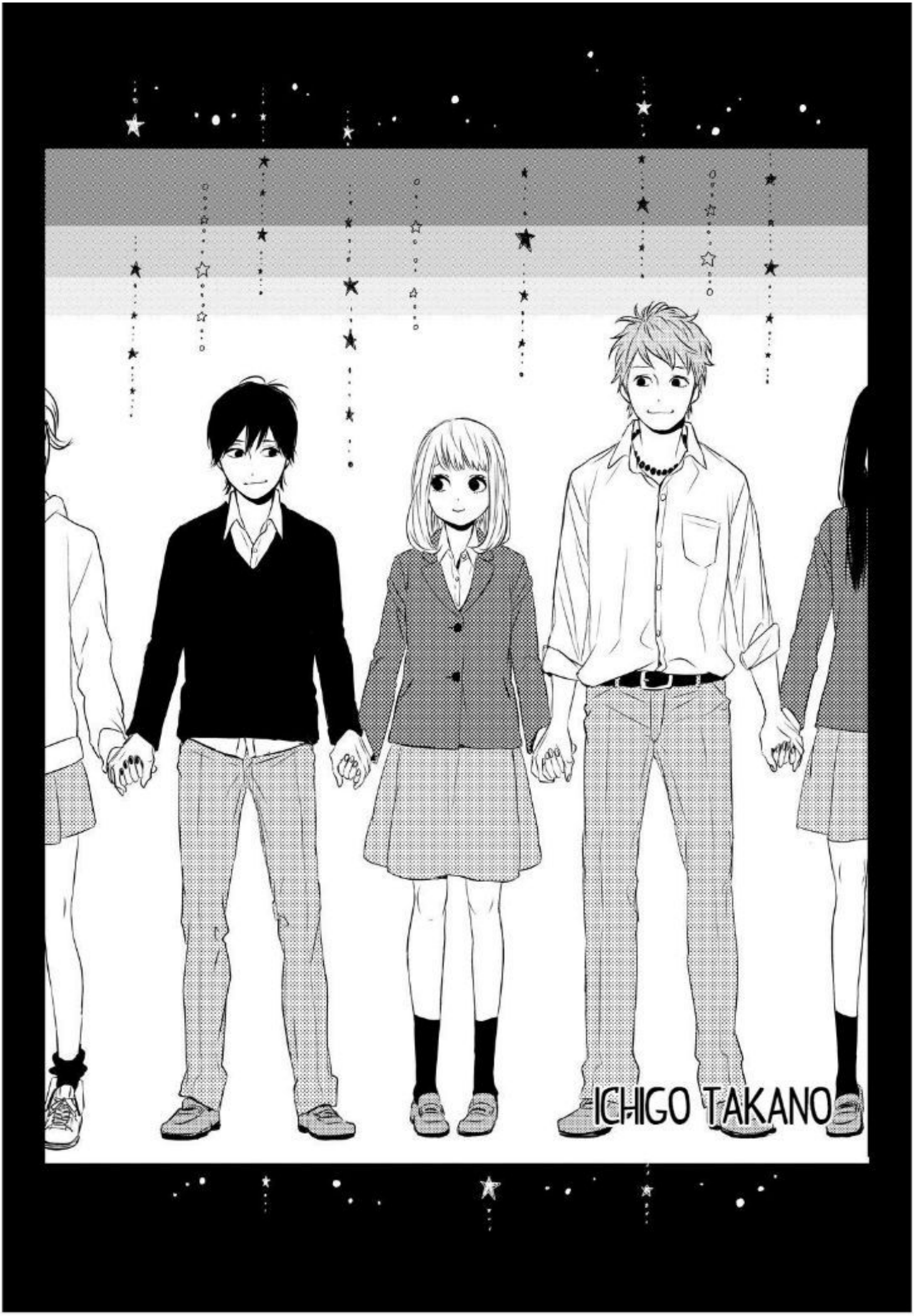

ICHIGO TAKANO

...HAS LED TO A BRIGHT FUTURE, I HOPE.
...EVEN IF IT'S LITTLE BY LITTLE...
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE UP TO NOW...
CHFF
KAKERU!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA PRACTICE OUT HERE? GET CHANGED!
HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO, KAKERU?

WHAT SHOULD I DO? I CAN'T LOOK KAKERU IN THE FACE.

COME ON! I'LL KNOW IT!
YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW IT, HAGITA-KUN.

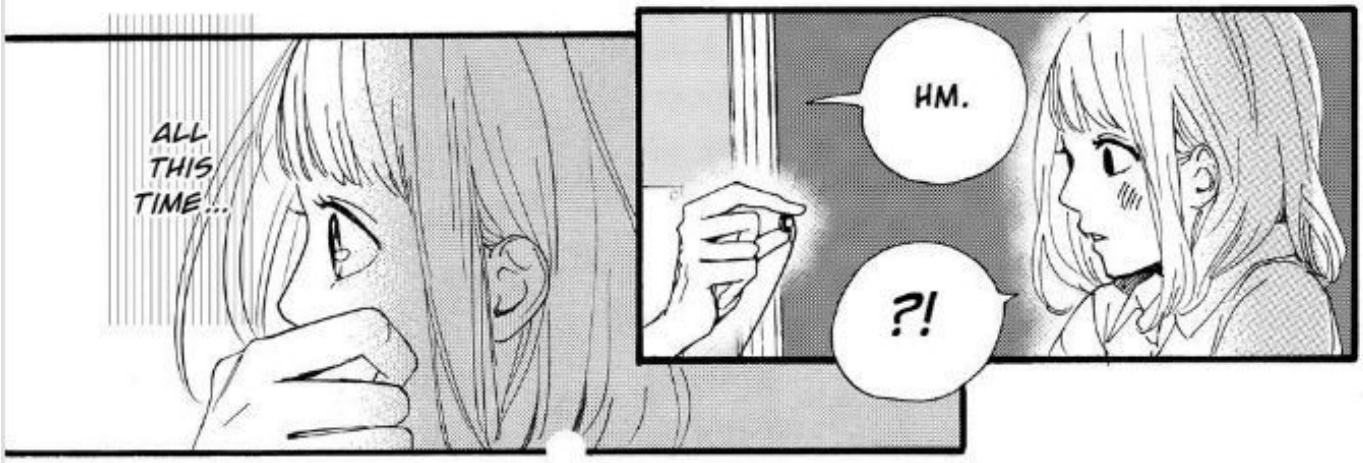
LET ME LISTEN TO IT A SEC.
WHY?
Huh?
WHY NOT? COME ON!
GIVE IT TO ME!
チラ
GLANCE

I FEEL SO...
...SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT YESTERDAY.
カァ
BLUSH

Ah!
That hurts!

トク
THUMP

...
WANNA LISTEN?

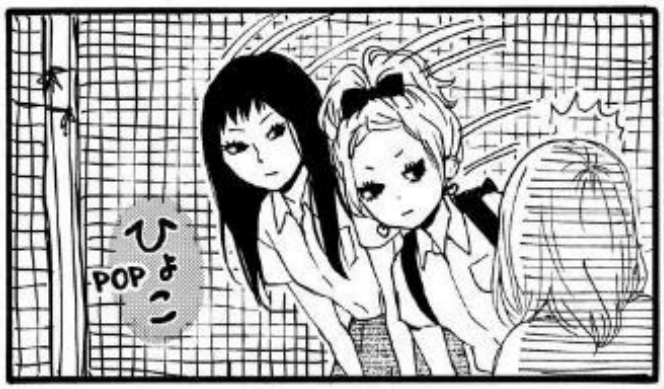

HM.
?!
ALL THIS TIME...

OUR EYES MEET AT LAST.
...I'VE BEEN HESITATING OVER HOW TO SAY SOMETHING TO HIM.

I BET...
...KAKERU NOTICED THAT, TOO.
OH, GOOD!
I SEE.
ON THE 22ND...
...I CANCELLED PLANS TO MEET MY TOKYO FRIEND.
HUH?
I MADE PLANS WITH SUWA INSTEAD.
IT'S MORE FUN HANGING OUT WITH HIM.

I'M SURE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY THAT IF THE LETTER HADN'T COME.
"I LOVE YOU."
Ha ha ha!
PFFT
CUT THAT OUT!
LET ME LISTEN!
I'VE BEEN ABLE TO CHANGE, THANKS TO THAT LETTER.
It's fun? Then that makes it all right... NOT!
Yeah, it's fun. Sorry!
Kakeru loves being mean to Hagita.

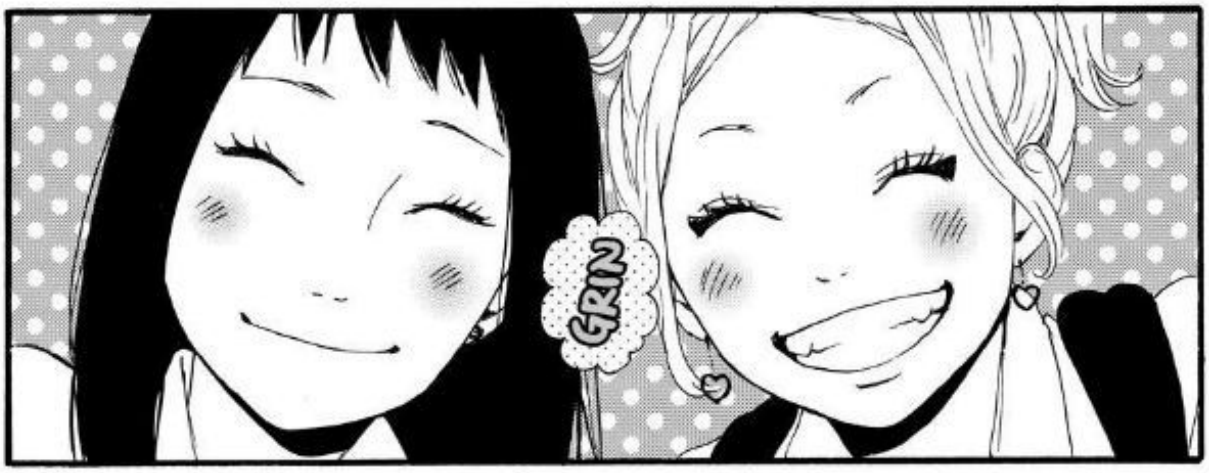
EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T EVEN...
...VOICE MY OPINIONS BEFORE...
...NOW I CAN EXPRESS MY FEELINGS.


POP
ひょこ

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE HIDING FROM US?

...BUT YESTERDAY, I TOLD KAKERU HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM.
IT'S... IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS HIDING IT...

HUH?
HIDING?!
DO THEY MEAN WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY?!
Did they hear from Kakeru or Suwa?


GRIN

BUT... WE DIDN'T SAY WE WERE DATING...

BOYFRIEND?

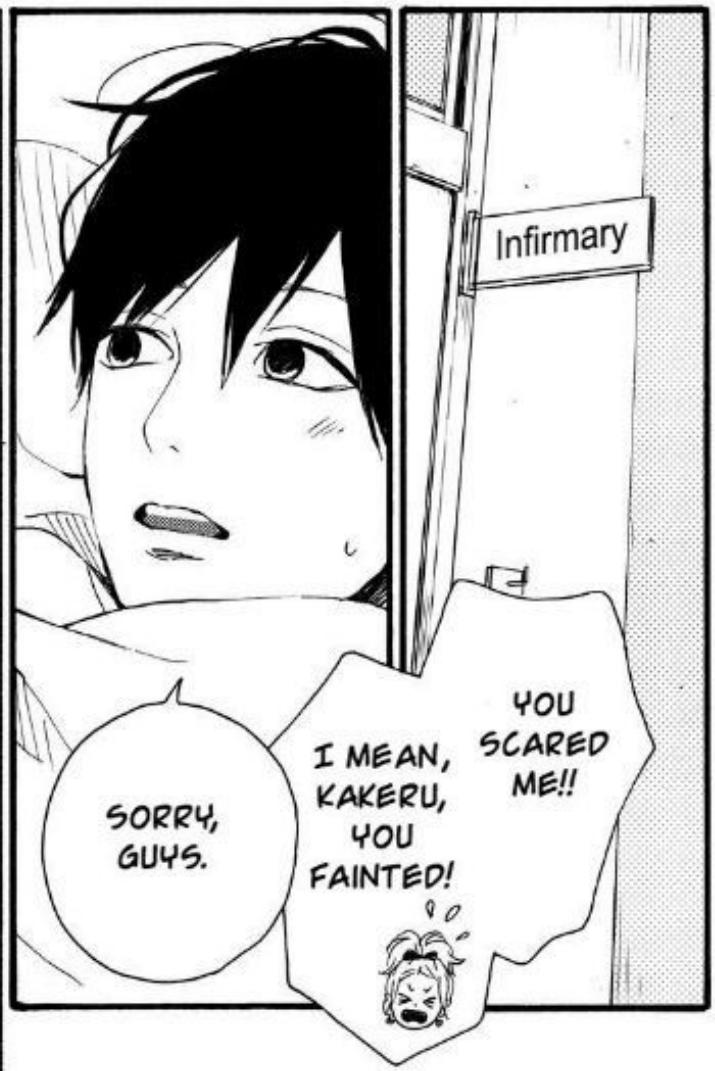
CONGRATU-LATIONS! YOUR FIRST BOYFRIEND!
NOTHING TO BE PROUD ABOUT! I WAS NERVOUS, AND MY VOICE WAS SHAKY...
THAT'S FANTASTIC, NAHO! I'M PROUD OF YOU!!

IS THERE...
SO?
ANYTHING ELSE?
...ANYTHING ELSE YOU'RE KEEPING FROM US?

ANYTHING ELSE I'M HIDING...?
ANYTHING ELSE?
KAKERU!!

NARUSE!
ARE YOU OKAY?!

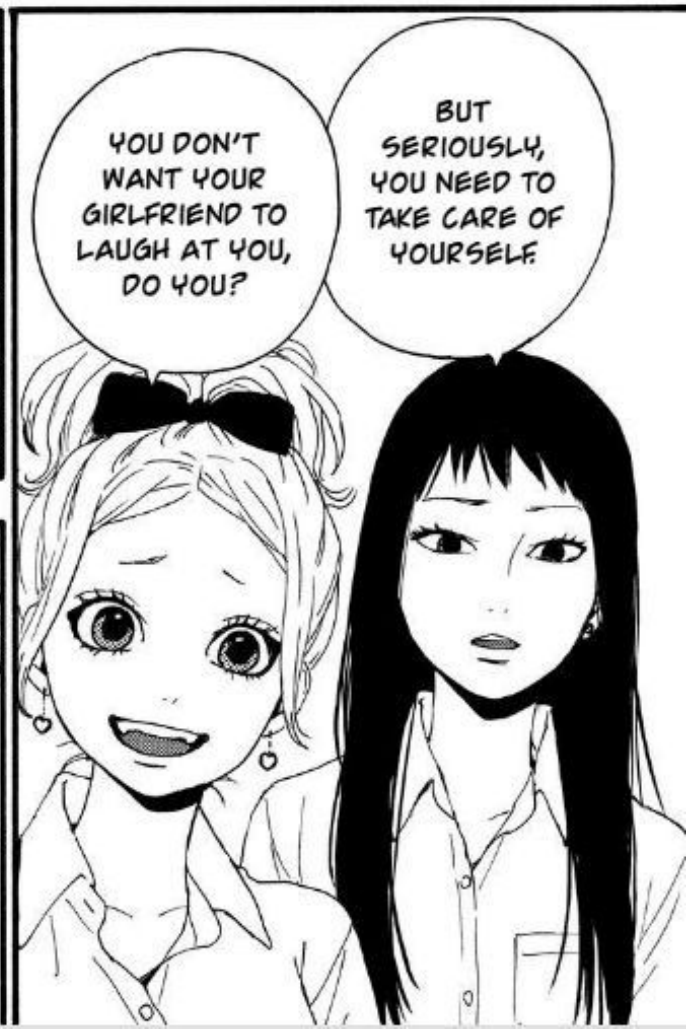
IT'S FINE...
...BUT ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH.
I JUST GOT A LITTLE DIZZY.
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A WEAKLING!
I AM NOT!


Infirmary
SORRY, GUYS.
I MEAN, KAKERU, YOU FAINTED!
YOU SCARED ME!!

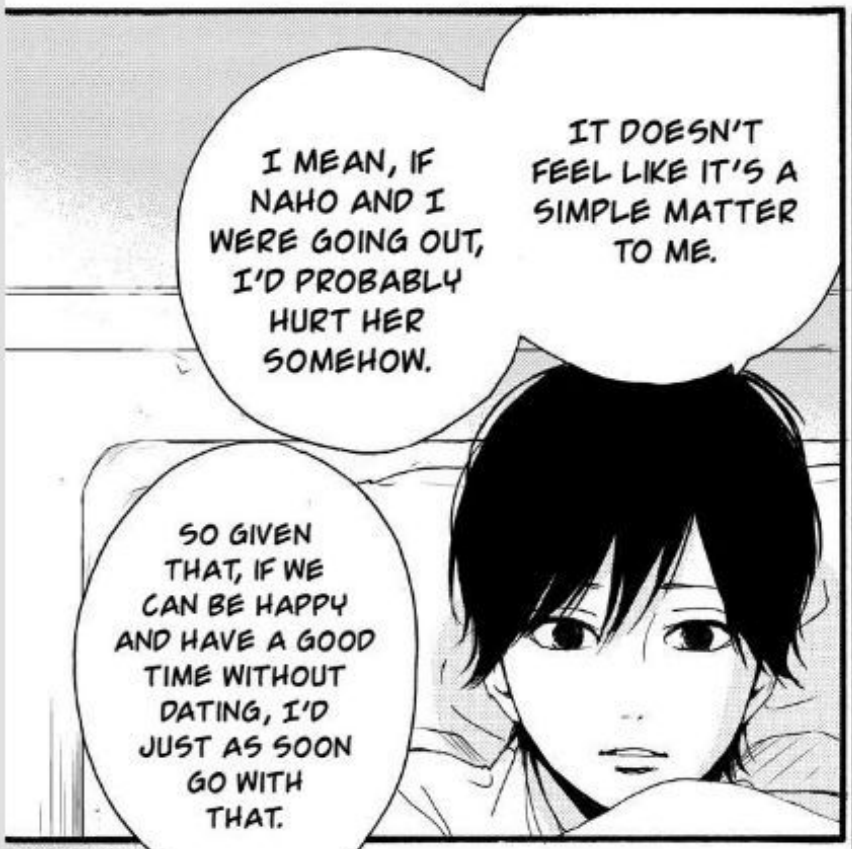
...
SUWA IS A GLUTTON!
HA HA HA
ARE YOU...
...EATING RIGHT THESE DAYS?
YEAH, THOUGH NOT AS MUCH AS YOU...
Ha ha ha!

...
MY GIRL-FRIEND?

NAHO, SILLY!
NAHO!


YOU DON'T WANT YOUR GIRLFRIEND TO LAUGH AT YOU, DO YOU?
BUT SERIOUSLY, YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

SHE'S NOT MY GIRLFRIEND.
WE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT GOING OUT YET, DID WE?


IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER TO ME.
I MEAN, IF NAHO AND I WERE GOING OUT, I'D PROBABLY HURT HER SOMEHOW.
SO GIVEN THAT, IF WE CAN BE HAPPY AND HAVE A GOOD TIME WITHOUT DATING, I'D JUST AS SOON GO WITH THAT.

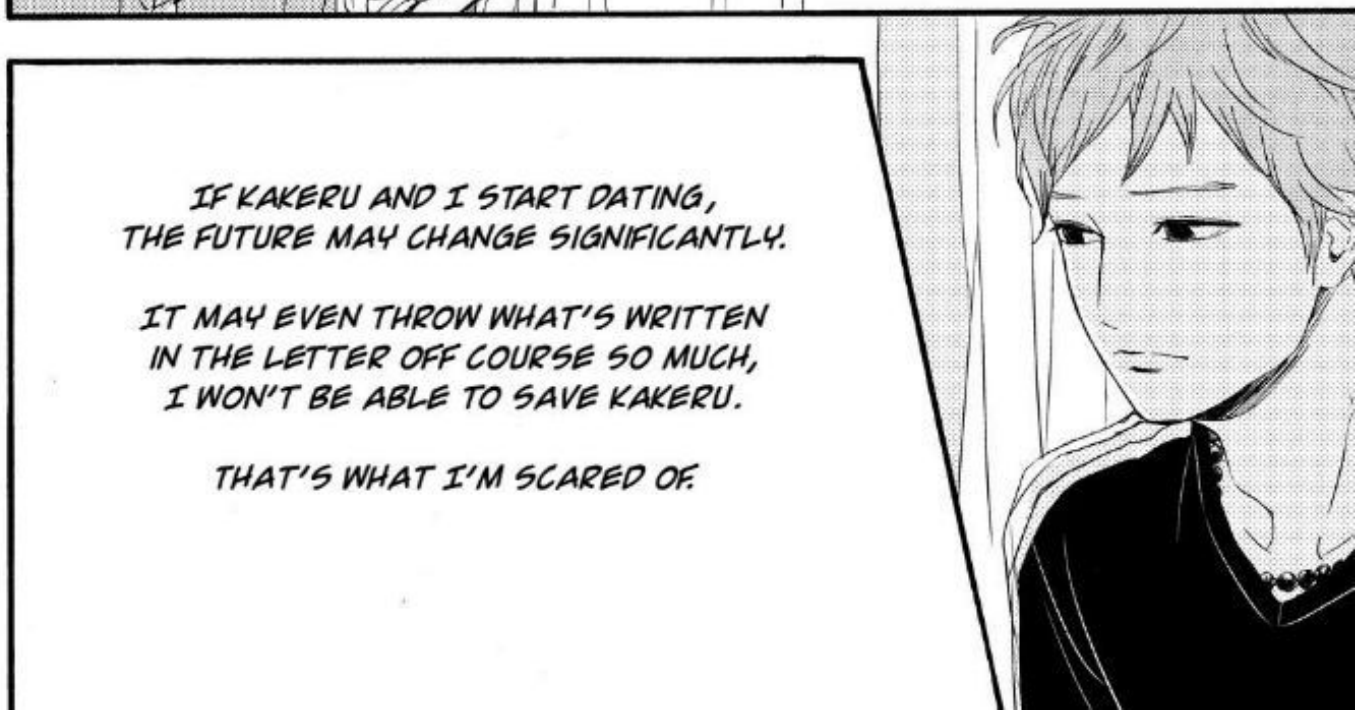
HUH?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IF TWO PEOPLE LOVE EACH OTHER, IT ONLY MAKES SENSE TO DATE!
EH? TAKAMIYA, ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH KAKERU, TOO?
YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE'S SAYING, SO SHUT UP.

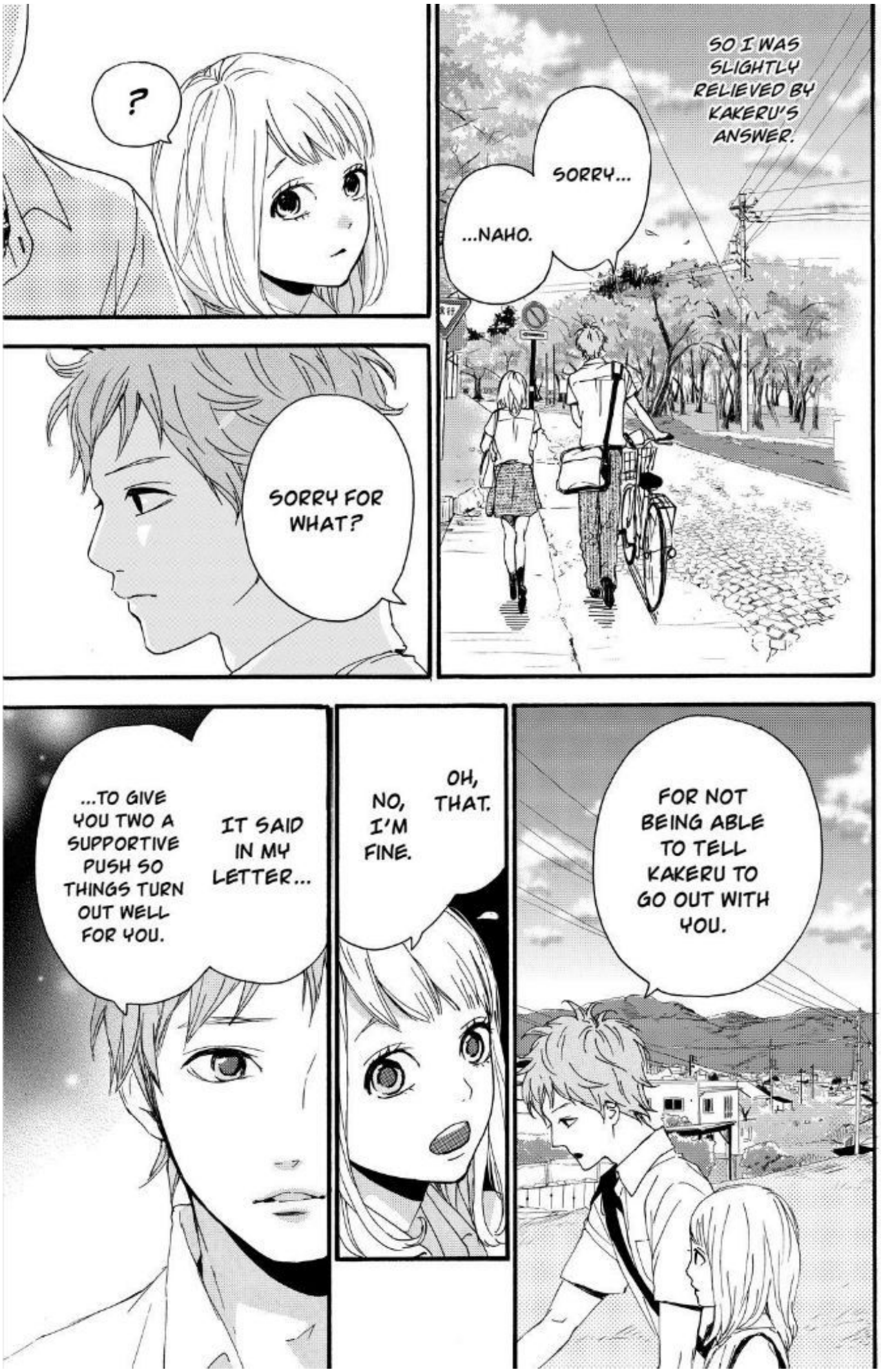
YEAH.

BECAUSE I REALLY DO...
...LOVE YOU.

THEN YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT NAHO'S FEELINGS...
...A LOT MORE THAN YOU DID WITH UEDA-SEMPAI.
WELL, DUH.

NARUSE-KUN, YOUR GRANDMOTHER IS HERE TO PICK YOU UP.
I THINK I KNOW HOW KAKERU FEELS.


IF KAKERU AND I START DATING, THE FUTURE MAY CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY.
IT MAY EVEN THROW WHAT'S WRITTEN IN THE LETTER OFF COURSE SO MUCH, I WON'T BE ABLE TO SAVE KAKERU.
THAT'S WHAT I'M SCARED OF.


?
SO I WAS SLIGHTLY RELIEVED BY KAKERU'S ANSWER.
SORRY...
...NAHO.
SORRY FOR WHAT?
...TO GIVE YOU TWO A SUPPORTIVE PUSH SO THINGS TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU.
IT SAID IN MY LETTER...
NO, I'M FINE.
OH, THAT.
FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO TELL KAKERU TO GO OUT WITH YOU.

I WONDER IF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER FROM MY FUTURE SELF ARE CORRECT.
BUT I COULDN'T DO IT.

...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...ABOUT KAKERU COLLAPSING TODAY?
DID YOUR LETTER SAY ANYTHING...
UH UH...
THEN THAT'S A NEW FUTURE THAT WAS BORN...
...ONLY IN OUR WORLD.

HUH?
...IT STARTED WHEN HE JOINED THE SOCCER CLUB.
I THINK...
BUT HE WANTS TO BE CHOSEN TO PLAY, SO EVERY DAY, HE WORKS TWICE AS HARD AS ANYONE ELSE.
HE'S STILL A NEWBIE IN THE CLUB, SO HE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO PLAY IN ANY MATCHES YET.
...IT MAKES ME WONDER...
...IF I WAS RIGHT TO INVITE HIM TO JOIN IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HE'S PROBABLY WORN HIMSELF OUT THAT WAY.
HE HASN'T BEEN LOOKING TOO WELL LATELY, EITHER.
IF THE CLUB IS BECOMING A BURDEN ON KAKERU...

I CAN TELL KAKERU LOVES BEING PART OF THE CLUB.
OF COURSE YOU WERE.
JUST BECAUSE HIS FAINTING WASN'T IN THE LETTER DOESN'T MEAN IT'S THE CLUB'S FAULT.
YEAH...
BUT EVEN IF THE FUTURE CAN BE CHANGED BECAUSE OF THE LETTER, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN...
...AND THAT'S MAKIN' ME A LITTLE NERVOUS.
RIGHT NOW, I KIND OF UNDERSTAND WHY SUWA'S AFRAID...
...TO MAKE A CHOICE.

...BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE ANY MORE REGRETS.

...MADE ME THINK I HAD TO DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER...

NOT BEING ABLE TO SAVE KAKERU ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY...

"I WONDER IF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE LETTER FROM MY FUTURE SELF ARE CORRECT."

TWEEET

...BUT I KNOW IT'S NOT MISTAKEN.

I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE...

THAT LETTER HAS HELPED ME OUT TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

OCTOBER 1ST
DURING P.E., EVERYONE'S TIMES ARE RECORDED IN THE 100-METER DASH.
KAKERU IS CHOSEN TO RUN THE RELAY AT THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

SIX BOYS AND GIRLS FROM OUR CLASS ARE GOING TO DO IT.
KAKERU IS THE FASTEST RUNNER, SO HE'S GOING TO BE THE ANCHOR.

BUT ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL, DURING THE RELAY, KAKERU IS RUNNING IN THE LEAD WHEN HE SUDDENLY TWISTS HIS ANKLE AND FALLS. AS A RESULT, THE CLASS COMES IN LAST.

KAKERU FEELS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS.

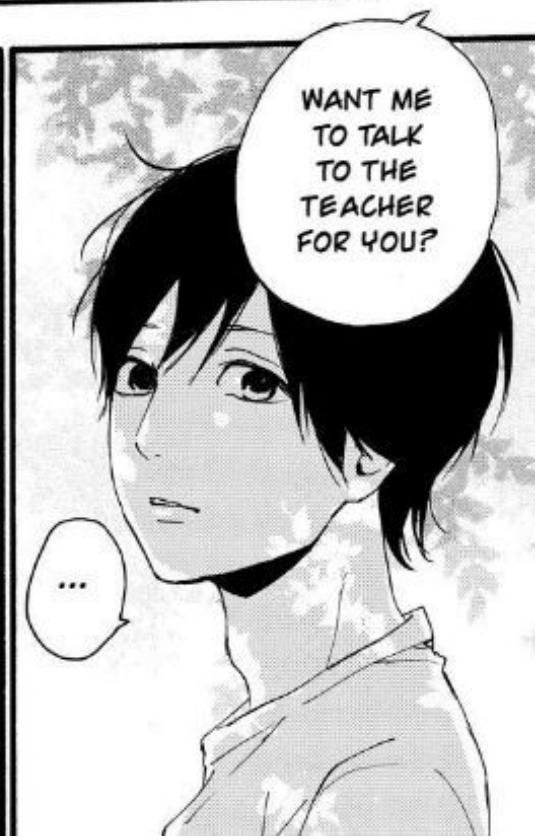
HE WAS ANXIOUS ABOUT BEING CHOSEN FOR THE EVENT. HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PUT UNDER THAT MUCH PRESSURE.

IT SEEMS HE PUT HIMSELF IN THE SHOES OF AZU, WHO STRUCK OUT, LOSING THE BASEBALL GAME AT THE SPRING BALL GAME TOURNAMENT.

FOR KAKERU'S SAKE, DO SOMETHING SO HE'S NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE RELAY TEAM.

HUH?
HOW ABOUT I RUN IN YOUR PLACE?
KAKERU!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
IF IT'S TOO MUCH PRESSURE...
IT'S OKAY TO DROP OUT!
TH-THAT'S RIGHT!

LOOKING FORWARD TO IT?
I'M ACTUALLY KIND OF LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
NO, IT'S FINE.


WANT ME TO TALK TO THE TEACHER FOR YOU?
...

SO I WANNA GIVE BEING ANCHOR A TRY.

IT MAKES ME THINK I CAN BE USEFUL SOMETIMES!
I'M HAPPY TO BE PICKED.

...

YOU REALLY WANNA DO IT, FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART?
WAIT... ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
WHAT THE HECK?

KAKERU SAYS HE WANTS TO DO IT, SO JUST LET HIM DO IT.

KAKERU'S FEELINGS HAVE CHANGED...
IT'S BECAUSE I CHANGED THE FUTURE AT THE BALL GAME TOURNAMENT.

IT'S JUST THAT YOU COLLAPSED THE OTHER DAY, KAKERU.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN...
NO... IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T WANT HIM TO DO IT...
UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A REASON FOR NOT WANTING HIM TO DO IT?
MAYBE...
...I SHOULDN'T DO IT AFTER ALL.
WELL, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN...
...BUT KAKERU WANTS TO DO IT.
I KNOW, BUT...
HEY, YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE TO CLASS!
SHUT UP, HAGITA!
IF I FELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RELAY...
...I WOULD RUIN IT FOR EVERYONE.

YEAH.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, KAKERU?
Y-YEAH, SURE.
SUWA, WILL YOU RUN FOR ME?
THANK YOU.

...HE MUST'VE BEEN HAPPY TO BE CHOSEN.
AFTER NOT BEING ABLE TO PLAY IN MATCHES FOR THE CLUB...

WELL, WE DIDN'T EXPECT KAKERU TO SAY HE WANTED TO DO IT.

I THINK...
...I WAS WRONG TO DO THAT.

BUT I THINK I FELL A LITTLE SHORT OF THAT WISH THIS TIME.

...SO THERE MAY BE THINGS REQUESTED OF ME IN THE LETTER THAT I CAN'T FULFILL.

THE FUTURE IS CHANGING NOW...

SUWA!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WHEN THAT TIME COMES?
COME HERE A SECOND.
?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE HIDING FROM US?
??
WHERE'S NAHO?
WHAT?

ABOUT KAKERU!

SENSEI!
WHAT IS IT, NARUSE?
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE RELAY AT THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

SENSEI!
...YEAH.
WHAT?
YOU DON'T WANNA BE THE ANCHOR?
TAKA-CHAN?
WHAT IS IT, CHINO?

I WANT TO BE IN THE RELAY.
YOU WANT TO DO IT?
WHAT IS THIS?
SENSEI, ME TOO!
I WANNA RUN IN THE RELAY!
SWISH

REPRESENTING THE CLASS IS KIND OF A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY, SO...
...IF POSSIBLE, I'D LIKE TO LET ONE OF THEM TO RUN IN MY PLACE.
THE THING IS...
...I'VE ALREADY CHOSEN THE RUNNERS.
UM...
ACTUALLY, WE TALKED ABOUT IT, AND I MADE A DECISION.

WELL, IT'S THE FIRST ATHLETIC FESTIVAL SINCE KAKERU STARTED HERE...
...SO I THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN TO DO IT TOGETHER.
WHAT IS THIS SUDDEN URGE TO BE IN THE RELAY?
I FEEL...
...THE SAME WAY.

WE WANT TO RUN WITH KAKERU.

I'LL TAKE HIS PLACE.
Me, too!
I WANT SOMEBODY TO TAKE MY PLACE!
WHAT?! IT'S NO FAIR IF ONLY THE GIRLS GET TO SWITCH!
NOW SEE WHAT YOU'VE STARTED?!

"I WONDER IF THE LETTER'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE CORRECT."
I WANT TO RUN IN THE RELAY WITH KAKERU, TOO.
EVERYTHING I DO...
...DOESN'T HAVE TO BASED ON FOLLOWING THAT LETTER.
EVEN THE FUTURE ME DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE RESULTS WILL BE.
THERE'S NO NEED TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT KIND OF DOUBT.

ガタ
RATTLE
I...
I...
MY VOICE...

...IS SHAKING.
I WANT TO RUN...
...WITH KAKERU.
HEY.
HAGITA.
...

HAGITA...
...
HA-
GI-
TA!
ガタ
RATTLE
ギー
CREAK
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M FAST OR ANYTHING, BUT...
CAN I BE IN IT, TOO?

KAKERU IS THE ANCHOR...
...SO WE'LL PASS THE BATON OFF TO EACH OTHER UNTIL IT GETS TO HIM.

A DIFFERENT PATH IS FINE...

...AS LONG AS WE MAKE SURE IT LEADS TO A BRIGHT FUTURE.

I'M RESPONSIBLE...

...FOR SAVING KAKERU...

...AND MAKING HIM SMILE EVERY DAY.

ICHIGO TAKANO

THE RELAY RUNNERS FOR THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL...
...ARE NARUSE, SUWA, HAGITA, CHINO, MURASAKA, AND TAKAMIYA.

HAGITA, CAN YOU ACTUALLY RUN?
OF COURSE NOT...
AHAHA
YES, YOU CAN! WHEN YOU REALLY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, YOU PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS!
FORGET IT. I QUIT.

THANKS, SUWA! DO YOUR BEST!
YOU GUYS REALLY ARE CLOSE!
THWACK
OUCH...

THANK YOU.

I'M OVERJOYED.
NOW I'M...
...LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RELAY EVEN MORE.
KAKERU SMILED...
I FIGURED YOU'D VOLUNTEER TOO, NAHO.
I HEARD YOU'D BE WILLING TO TAKE MY PLACE.
EH?
NAHO-CHAN!
THANK YOU FOR TAKING MY PLACE IN THE RELAY!
ARE YOU SURE? YOU DON'T MIND IF I DO IT?
OF COURSE I DON'T!

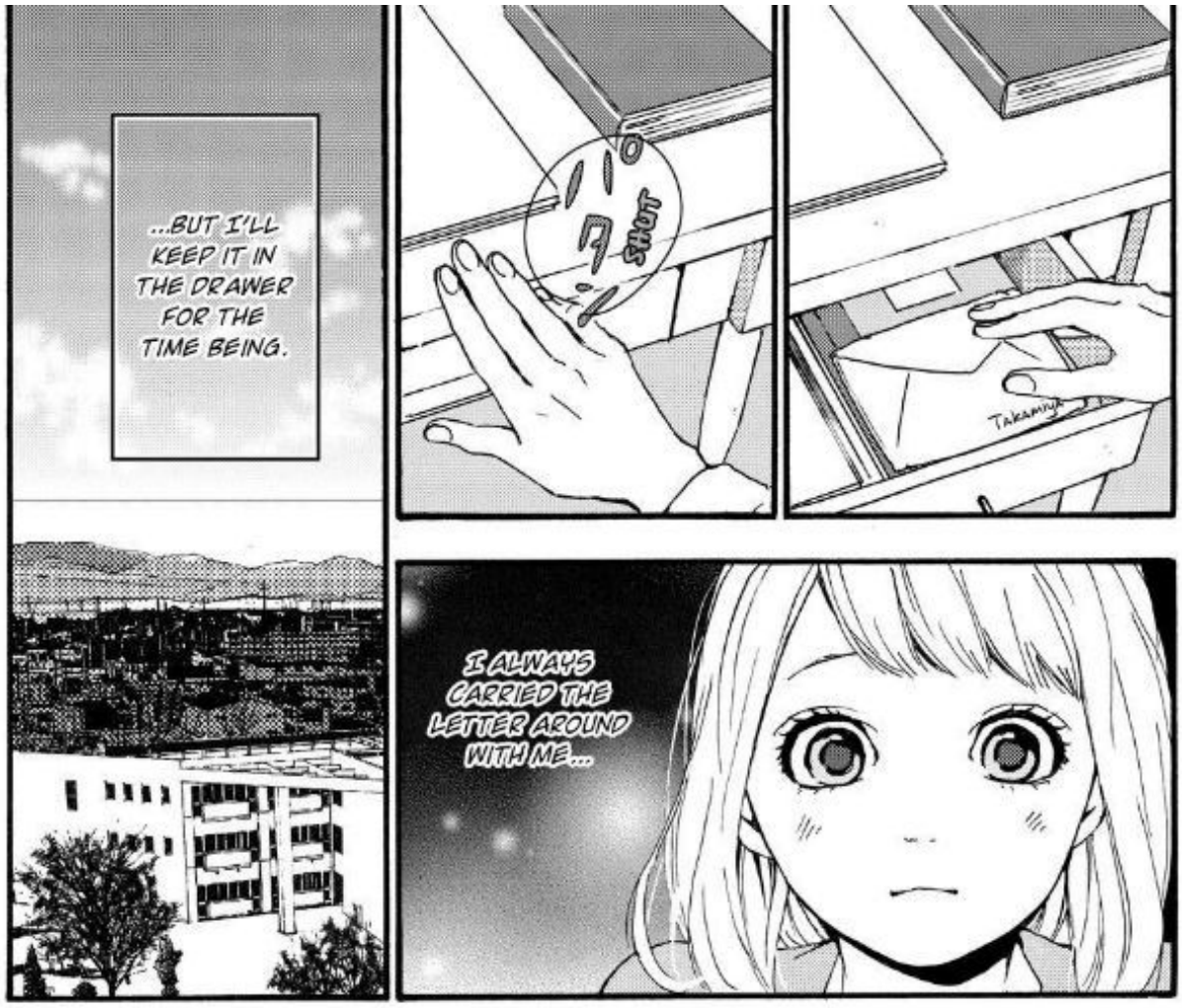
I'M GLAD IT WORKED OUT THIS WAY.

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT...
THIS TIME, WE MADE A DIFFERENT CHOICE THAN WHAT THE LETTERS SUGGESTED...
...BUT IF THE RESULT LEADS TO SAVING KAKERU, THEN IT'S ALL TO THE GOOD.
I'M HAPPY...
...IT TURNED OUT THIS WAY, TOO.
THANK YOU, SUWA.
YEAH.
IT'S THE OTHERS WHO PULLED THIS OFF.
NAH...
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

OCTOBER 14TH
THE LETTER'S ENTRIES... THE NEXT ONE IS THE DAY OF THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.
SUWA...
FOR NOW, I'M GOING TO STOP RELYING ON THE LETTER.
OKAY.
WELL, I THINK I'M GONNA HIT THE SACK.
RUSTLE

YEAH.
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.

INSTEAD, I'M GOING TO TRY THINKING ABOUT WHAT WOULD MAKE KAKERU MOST HAPPY...
...AND THEN ACT ON THAT.


...BUT I'LL KEEP IT IN THE DRAWER FOR THE TIME BEING.
SHUT
Takamiya
I ALWAYS CARRIED THE LETTER AROUND WITH ME...

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU RUN WEIRD...
SHUT UP!
ゼー WHEEZE
ゼー PANT
I TOLD YOU I COULDN'T DO IT!

THAT WAS SLOW, HAGITA!
ピッ BEEP
OKAY, FINISH LINE.

I THINK YOU'RE ACTUALLY THE SLOWEST RUNNER IN OUR YEAR.
UGH!
I'M A DISGRACE, AND I KNOW IT.
I'M THE SLOWEST KID IN CLASS.

THE TEACHER SAID THAT EVEN IF WE COME IN LAST PLACE, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

THE POINT IS FOR KAKERU TO ENJOY THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

AND KAKERU WOULD ENJOY COMING IN LAST, WOULD HE?

I WANT TO RUN WITH YOU TOO, HAGITA-KUN.

IF THE SIX OF US GET TO RUN TOGETHER...

...I'LL BE HAPPY NO MATTER WHAT PLACE WE'RE IN.

RUNNING IN THE RELAY WILL MAKE YOU POPULAR, HAGITA-KUN.

YEESH. WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. FINE, I'LL DO IT.

...

DING DONG キーンコーン

DING DONG カーンコーン

LET'S GO BACK IN.

WHAT'S NEXT AGAIN?

MATH.

HEY.
HM?
ON THE WAY HOME TODAY...
...I WANT YOU TO HANG OUT WITH ME FOR A BIT.
...
?
UM, OKAY...

NAHO...
HOW ABOUT WALKING ME TO THE DOOR?
YEAH, SURE.
SUWA, I'LL SEE YOU AT THE CLUB.
OKAY. TELL 'EM I GOTTA CLEAN UP HERE BEFORE I GO.

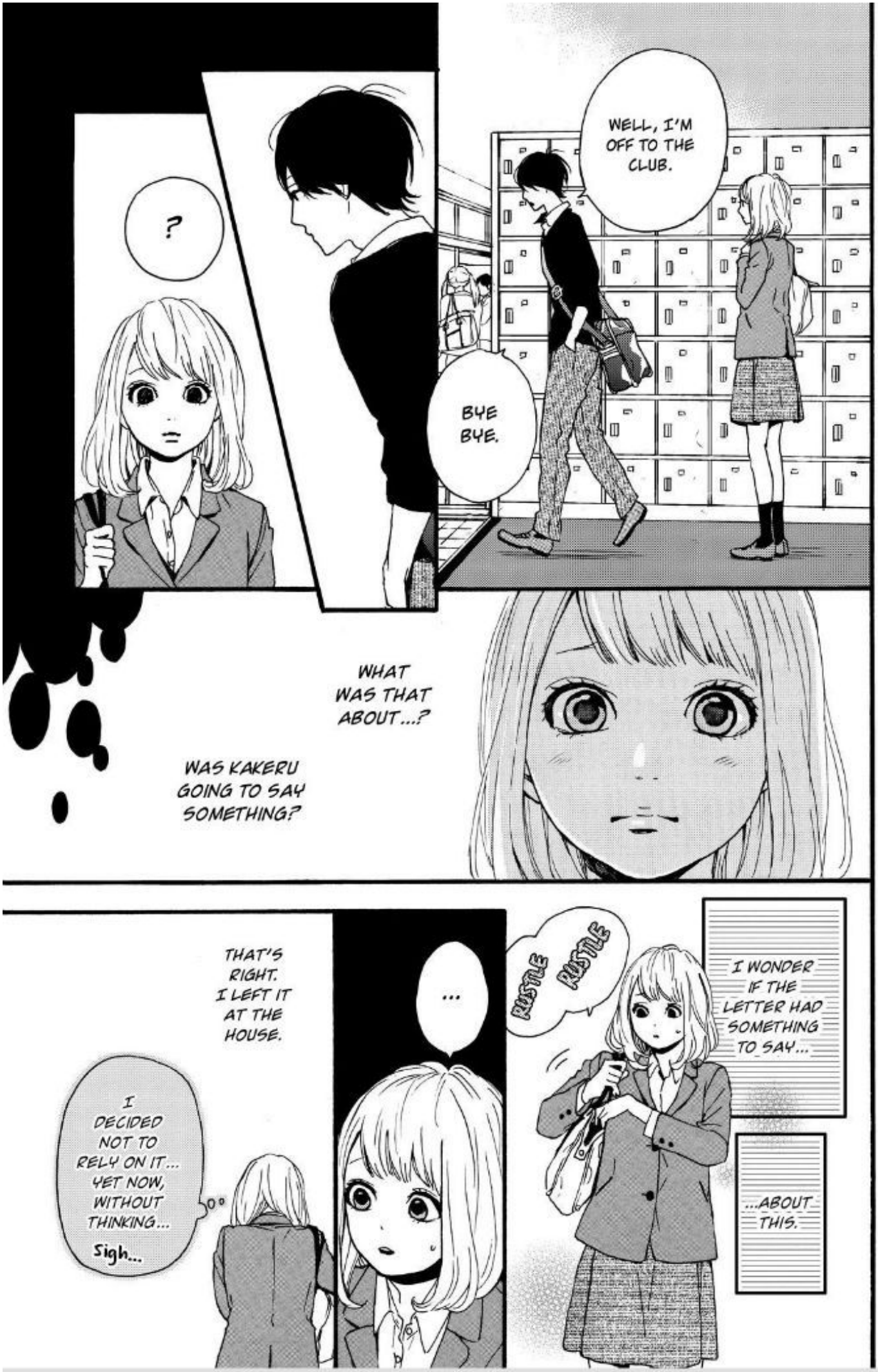
I'M HAPPY.
WE'RE ALONE.
AH...
ALTHOUGH THAT IS JUST LIKE YOU...
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS A PACE BEHIND WHOEVER YOU'RE WALKING WITH.
YOU WALK SLOWLY, DON'T YOU, NAHO?
O-OH, REALLY?

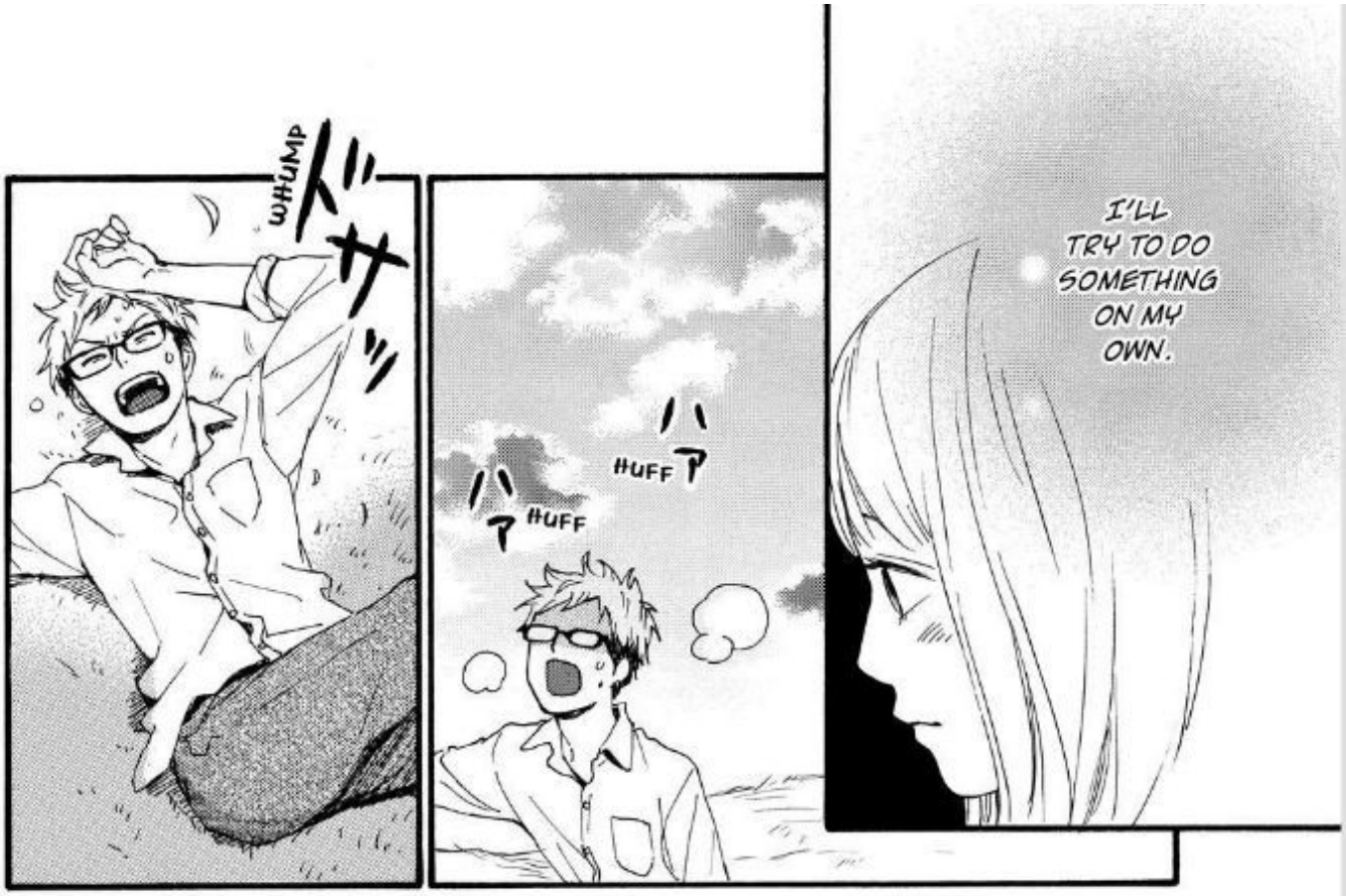
STRANGE...
...BUT I'M HAPPY TO HEAR IT.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT WAS A COMPLIMENT OR ANYTHING...
THE WIND'S GOTTEN COOLER, HUH?
YEAH!
KAKERU IS NOTICING EVEN THE SMALLEST DETAILS ABOUT ME.

GRAB
TWIST
!
S...
SORRY!
ARE YOU OKAY?!

I'M SORRY.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? I GRABBED RIGHT ONTO KAKERU.
EVEN WITH OTHER PEOPLE AROUND...
HOW EMBARRASSING.

...
WHAT...?
...
NOTHING.
NOTHING, REALLY.


WELL, I'M OFF TO THE CLUB.
BYE BYE.
?
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT...?
WAS KAKERU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING?
I WONDER IF THE LETTER HAD SOMETHING TO SAY...
...ABOUT THIS.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
...
THAT'S RIGHT. I LEFT IT AT THE HOUSE.
I DECIDED NOT TO RELY ON IT... YET NOW, WITHOUT THINKING...
Sigh...


WHUMP
ドサッ
HUFF
ハア
HUFF
ハア
I'LL TRY TO DO SOMETHING ON MY OWN.

YOU DON'T NEED TO PRACTICE ANY MORE.
HOW CAN I RUN EVEN FASTER?

HEY! I GOT FASTER, RIGHT?
THAT WAS FASTER THAN BEFORE, WASN'T IT?
WOW! YOU'RE GETTING FASTER AND FASTER!
SERIOUSLY?! AWESOME!

IN FACT, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU WANTED ME OUT HERE WITH YOU.
THE OTHERS ARE FASTER, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE THEM COACHING YOU.

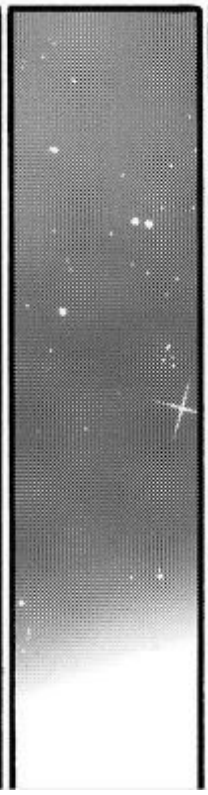
...
...

WHY IS IT US TWO?
THAT WOULDN'T REQUIRE JUST THE TWO OF US.

WHAT?
I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD PRACTICE, TOO.

THERE'S SOMETHING...
...I WANNA TELL YOU.

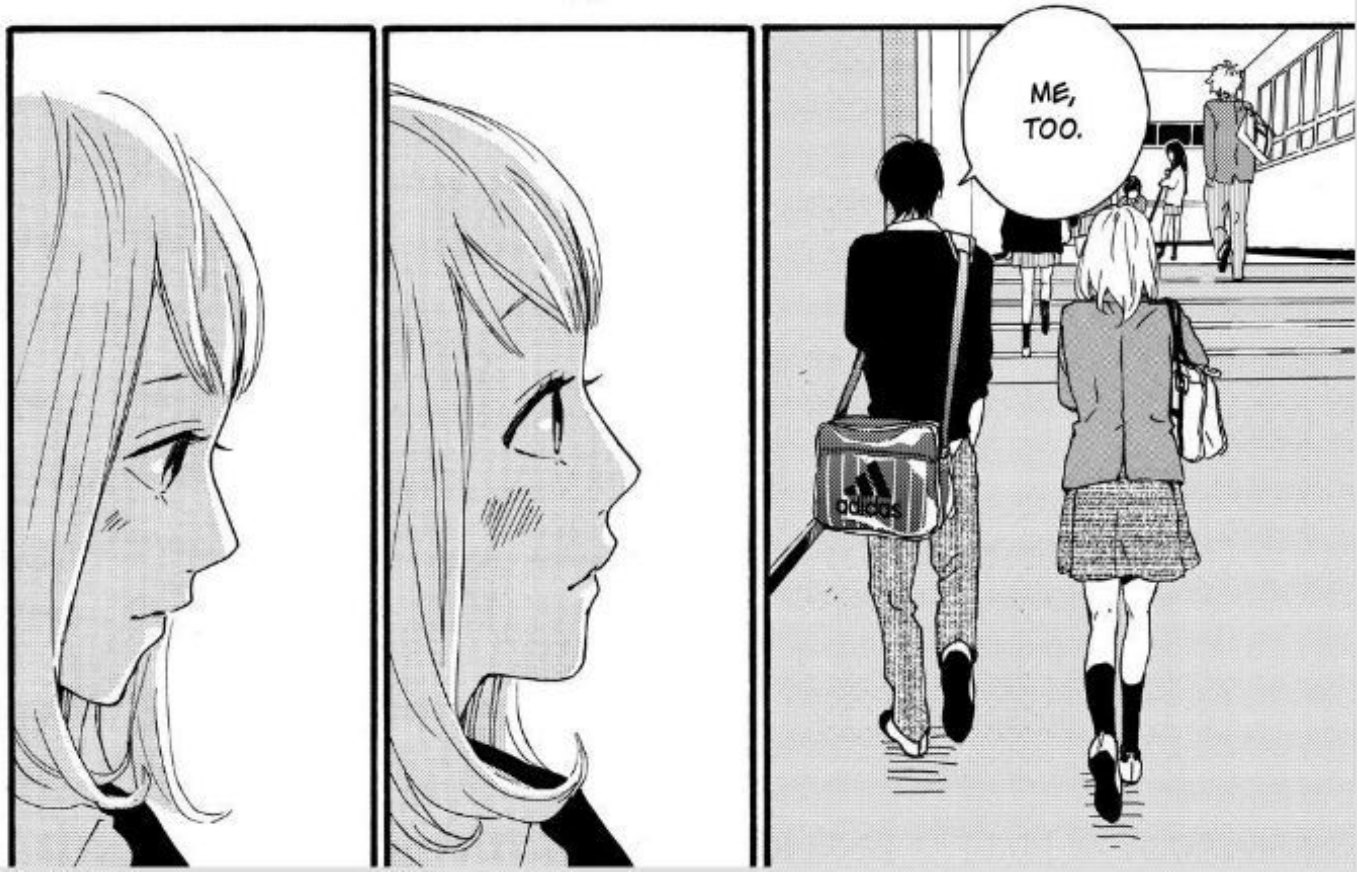
I'LL TRY ASKING KAKERU TOMORROW.



HEY.
HANG OUT WITH ME WHILE I PRACTICE TOMORROW, TOO.
WHAT?!

SURE...
KAKERU...
CAN I WALK YOU TO THE DOOR?

I SEE...
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
Y... YEAH.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D ASK ME, NAHO.


ME, TOO.

I'LL TRY ASKING HIM...
"HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?"

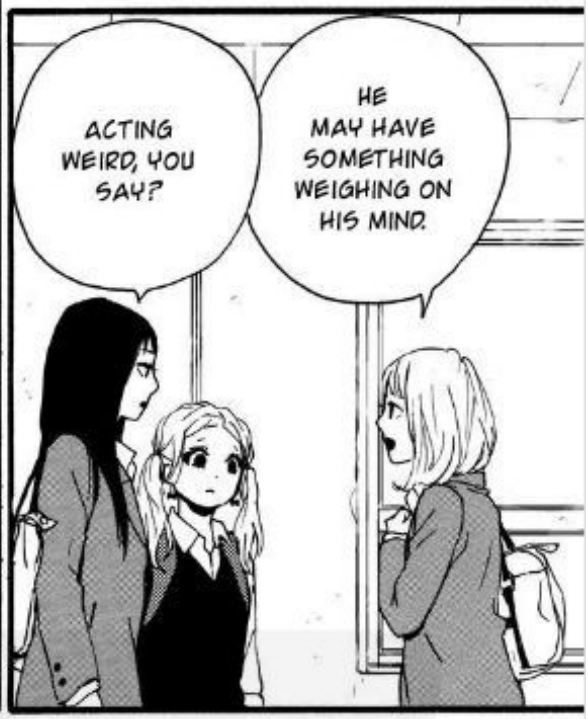
WHAT'S...
...WRONG...
...KAKERU?
NOTHING.
SORRY.
WELL...
BYE BYE. SEE YOU TOMORROW.
KAKERU...
WHAT'S WRONG?
I'M SORRY... I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING...

SUWA...
DID YOUR LETTER SAY ANYTHING...
...ABOUT KAKERU TODAY?
SUWA...
NOPE.
NOTHING FOR TODAY.
...
I SEE...
BUT I THOUGHT...
...YOU WEREN'T GONNA RELY ON THE LETTER FOR NOW.
TRUE...
BUT, I'M WORRIED ABOUT KAKERU...

...AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
RELY ON US, TOO.
DON'T PUT ALL YOUR CHIPS ON THE LETTER.
YOU'VE GOT THESE GUYS RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
EVERY-ONE...
WHAT'S WRONG?

WHY NOT TRY TALKING WITH THEM?
YOU'RE TROUBLED...
...ABOUT KAKERU?
WELL... UH...
YEAH?
...A LITTLE WEIRD.
KAKERU'S BEEN ACTING...

HE HOLDS OUT HIS HAND AND DOESN'T SAY A WORD.
LIKE THIS.
AND WHAT I ASK HIM WHAT IT'S FOR, HE WON'T ANSWER.


ACTING WEIRD, YOU SAY?
HE MAY HAVE SOMETHING WEIGHING ON HIS MIND.

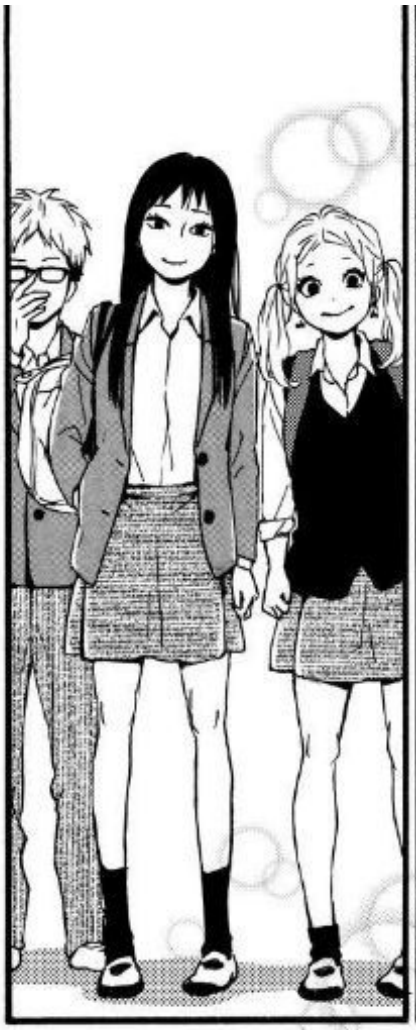
HA HA HA!

...
HE HAD A SAD EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE...
...SO I THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED.

I'M PRETTY SURE...
...KAKERU JUST WANTED TO HOLD HANDS WITH YOU.

?

HOLD HANDS WITH ME?!
HOLD HANDS WITH THE POOR GUY!
OF COURSE HE'D LOOK SAD!
...
EH?!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT...
NOT VERY MANLY OF KAKERU, THOUGH.
YEAH, SAME.
I WOULD'VE SAID RIGHT OUT, "HEY, LET'S HOLD HANDS."
IS THAT WHAT IT WAS?
IT MEANT HE WANTED TO HOLD HANDS...
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THERE'S NOTHING YOU HAVE TO HIDE FROM US.
THAT'S RIGHT. TALK TO US MORE!
YOU BOTH OVERTHINK THINGS ALONE.
THAT'S SOMETHING YOU AND KAKERU HAVE IN COMMON.



"ARE YOU HIDING SOMETHING FROM US?"

...IF I TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT THE LETTER?

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...

PUT SIMPLY...
...I GOT A LETTER...
SO...
...FROM MYSELF, TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE.
WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT?
I CAN'T READ THAT EXPRESSION.
...FROM MY FUTURE SELF.
I GOT A LETTER...

I WONDER IF THEY'LL BE SHOCKED.
IT SAID, "I WANT YOU TO SAVE KAKERU."
MAYBE THEY'LL LAUGH AT ME.
MAYBE THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME.
THAT'S WHY I WANT ALL OF YOU TO HELP ME...
SURE.
OF COURSE WE WILL.
YOU FINALLY ASKED US FOR HELP.
LET'S GO OUTSIDE AND TALK.
THERE'S SOMETHING WE WANNA SHOW YOU.
THEY GET IT...!

HOW...?
Takako Chino
Azusa Mutasaka
HAGITA!
HAGITA, TOO. YESTERDAY AT THE PARK, HE SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING HE WANTED TO TELL ME...
YESTERDAY? AT THE PARK?
SORRY FOR KEEPING QUIET ABOUT IT.
WE GOT LETTERS FROM THE FUTURE, TOO.

HE SAID HE GOT ONE, TOO.
Saku Hagita
ALL OF US...
WHO IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD GO ON A DATE WITH THIS DUMBBELL?!
WHAT, WERE YOU TWO ON A DATE?
JUST GET THE LETTER OUT!
...GOT A LETTER.
ALL OF US HAVE THE SAME GOAL.
LET'S SAVE KAKERU...

...TOGETHER!

...WHO WON'T HAVE CHANGED, EVEN TEN YEARS FROM NOW.

FRIENDS...

I HAVE FRIENDS.

...TOGETHER.

LET'S SAVE KAKERU...

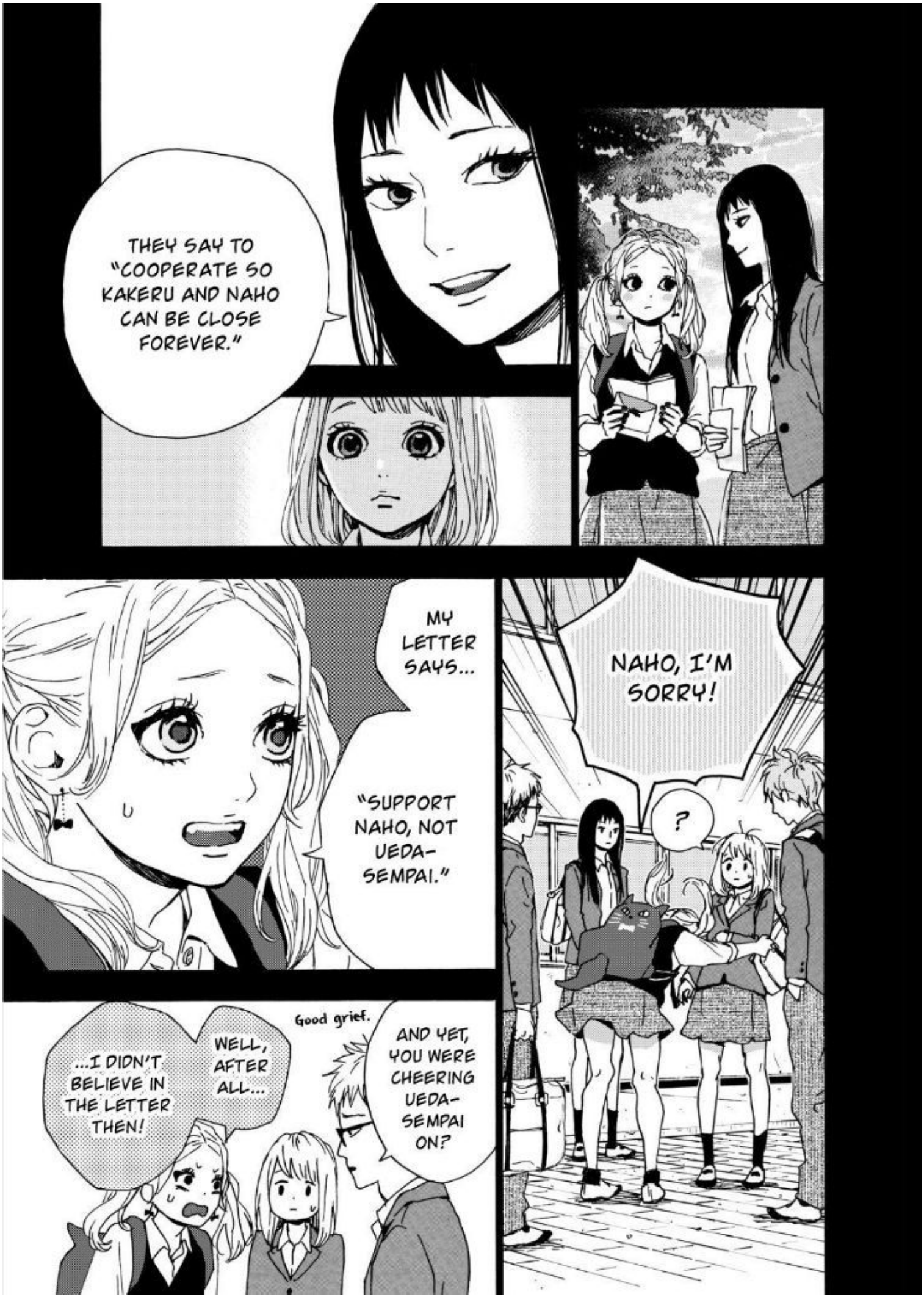
ALL OF US HAD REGRETS ABOUT KAKERU.
IT WASN'T JUST ME AND SUWA.
Naho Takamiya
Takako Chino
Azusa Muranaka
Hiroto Suwa
Satsu Hagita
...I WONDER IF HE WOULD BELIEVE US.
IF WE TOLD KAKERU...

CHAPTER 13

MORNING.

GOOD MORNING!
KAKERU, YOU LOOK MORE HANDSOME THAN USUAL TODAY!
WHAT THE HECK? COMING FROM YOU, YUCK!
SHE'S RIGHT. YOU'RE A HOTTIE!
WHAT ABOUT ME?!
NORMAL!
HEY!
HUH?

HOW LONG IS YOURS, NAHO?
ISN'T THIS NORMAL?
About five pages...
YOU THINK?
EH?
AREN'T ALL OF YOUR LETTERS KIND OF SHORT?
I GUESS THAT'S WHY MINE IS OVER TEN PAGES.
IT SAYS WHAT HAPPENS ON THAT DAY, WHAT I SHOULD DO, WITH LOTS OF DETAILS...
MINE HAS ENTRIES FOR INDIVIDUAL DAYS.
WHAT DO ALL OF YOUR LETTERS SAY?
Ha ha ha!
EVEN TEN YEARS FROM NOW, YOU'RE A HARD WORKER.
WOW! THAT'S JUST LIKE YOU, NAHO!
Ha ha ha!
Over ten pages!

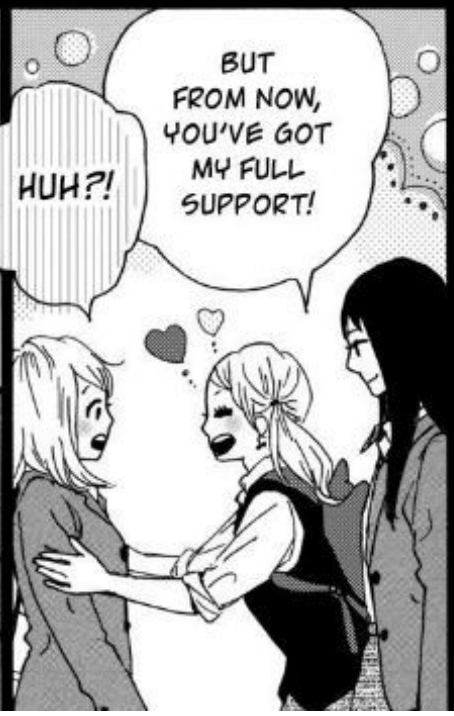

THEY SAY TO "COOPERATE SO KAKERU AND NAHO CAN BE CLOSE FOREVER."
MY LETTER SAYS...
"SUPPORT NAHO, NOT UEDA-SEMPAI."
NAHO, I'M SORRY!
?
Good grief.
...I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE LETTER THEN!
WELL, AFTER ALL...
AND YET, YOU WERE CHEERING UEDA-SEMPAI ON?

...NAHO BEGAN ACTING WEIRD.
BUT WHEN KAKERU STARTED GOING OUT WITH UEDA-SEMPAI...

I THOUGHT IT WAS A PRANK AT FIRST.
I MEAN, THE LETTER ALSO SAYS THAT NAHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH KAKERU...
...BUT I NEVER THOUGHT NAHO WOULD FALL FOR ANYONE.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN...

THAT'S WHEN...
...I FINALLY REALIZED THE LETTER WAS THE REAL DEAL.
AND I FELT BAD FOR NOT BEING SUPPORTIVE OF NAHO BACK THEN.

WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY MORE REGRETS.
RIGHT.


BUT FROM NOW, YOU'VE GOT MY FULL SUPPORT!
HUH?!

I THINK...
...IT'S CONNECTED TO SAVING KAKERU.
Really!
I'LL BE FINE WITHOUT ALL YOUR SUPPORT!
HEY, WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M SURE YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN MAKE HIM HAPPY.
SAVING KAKERU?
ME...?
THAT'S SIMPLE.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I SHOULD DO.
...IT'S REALLY HARD.
BUT...

WHEN I SAY "GOOD MORNING" TO KAKERU...
...HE ISN'T ESPECIALLY PLEASED.
BUT WHEN YOU TELL HIM "GOOD MORNING," HE IS ESPECIALLY PLEASED.
GET IT?!
NO...

I GET IT.
A GUY IS HAPPY JUST TO GET A TEXT FROM THE GIRL HE LIKES.
SO EVEN A GREETING WOULD DO IT.
Though it's never happened to me...

IF I SEND KAKERU A TEXT...
...YOU THINK HE'LL BE HAPPY?
SURE I DO.

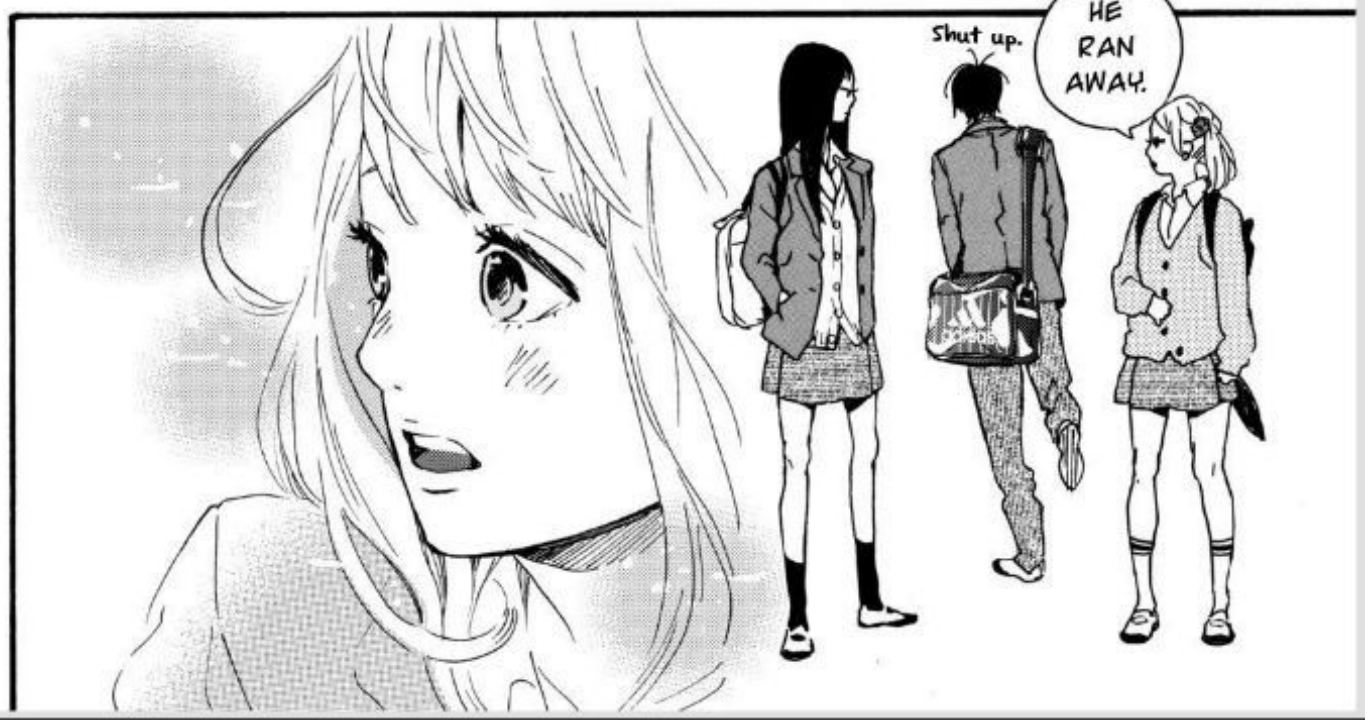
MY WHOLE MINDSET HAS CHANGED.
THE WORRIES I WAS CARRYING AROUND BY MYSELF NO LONGER SEEM SO REAL.
IT FEELS LIKE A WEIGHT HAS BEEN LIFTED OFF MY CHEST.
...AREN'T JUST MINE ANYMORE.
THE DOUBTS I HAD UP TO YESTERDAY...
I DIDN'T WANT TO STUMBLE INTO YOU AGAIN LIKE LAST TIME...
...SO I THOUGHT I'D PUT THEM ON AFTER YOU MOVED AWAY.
...
WHAT'S UP, NAHO? YOU'RE JUST STANDING THERE.
ARE YOU GOING TO CHANGE INTO YOUR SLIPPERS?
AH...
YEAH.

HUH?!
WHY DON'T YOU HOLD NAHO'S HAND?
KAKERU!
HOLD HER HAND TO SUPPORT HER.
WHA?!

... EMBARRASSED LIKE THAT AGAIN.
I DON'T WANT TO BE...

I'M GOING ON AHEAD.

WHY SHOULD WE HOLD HANDS?


Shut up.
HE RAN AWAY.

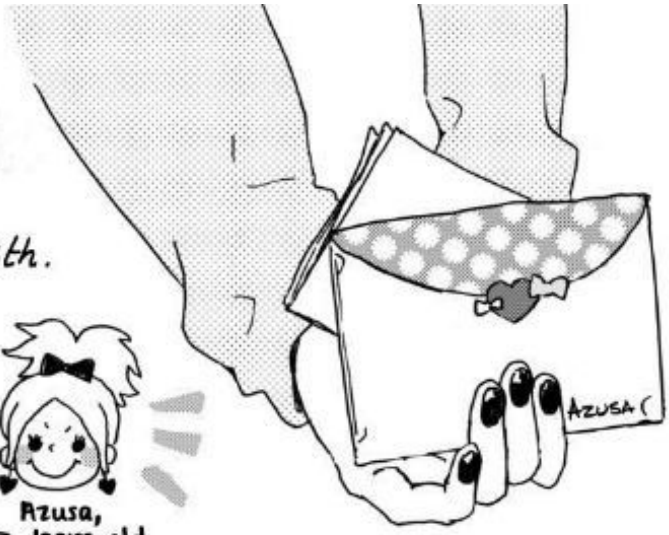
KAKERU!
G...
GOOD MORNING!

...Huh?
PFFFT
PFFFT
YOU SAID THAT BEFORE, RIGHT?
WHY SAY IT AGAIN?
SNORT
I KNOW, BUT...
...MY TIMING WAS, UM...
I...
Ha ha ha!
Ha!

IT'S TRUE.
AH...
HEY!
I BORROWED A BATON.
Let's practice!
Ah!
...TOLD EVERYONE ABOUT HIS TROUBLES...
MAYBE IF KAKERU...
...IT WOULD LIGHTEN HIS LOAD.

NOTHING, REALLY!
WE WERE DECIDING ON THE ORDER OF THE RELAY RUNNERS.
GOTCHA!
SO EVERYONE FOLLOW MY LEAD, ALL RIGHT?
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS WHISPERING ABOUT?
OH...?
?
SO WHAT'S THE ORDER?
WELL...
?

Don't forget October 5th.
It's my birthday!



After school that day, everyone will give you a birthday present. As I recall, right after you all decide to walk home together, it starts to rain.

Naho has her own folding umbrella and Kakeru says, "Let me under there."

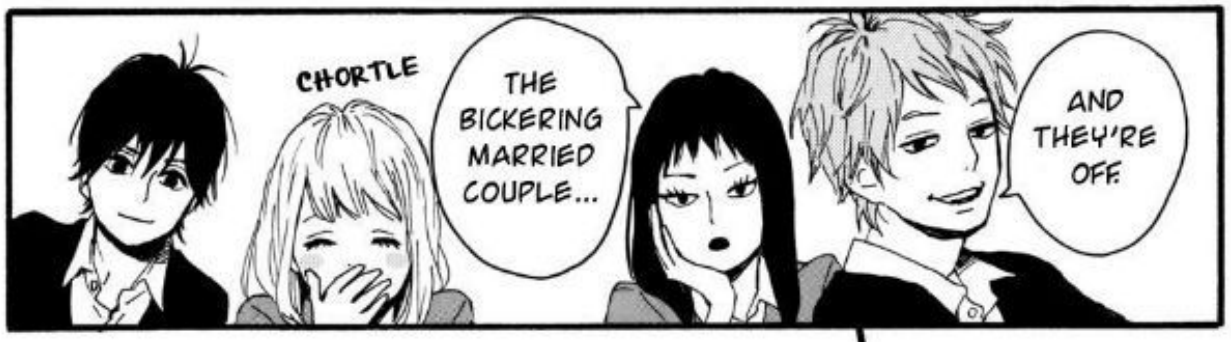
By coincidence, Hagita's present to me is a folding umbrella, which I lend to Kakeru.

In the end, we walk home with Taka-chan and me sharing Naho's umbrella while Kakeru, Suwa, and Hagita share the one Hagita gave me.

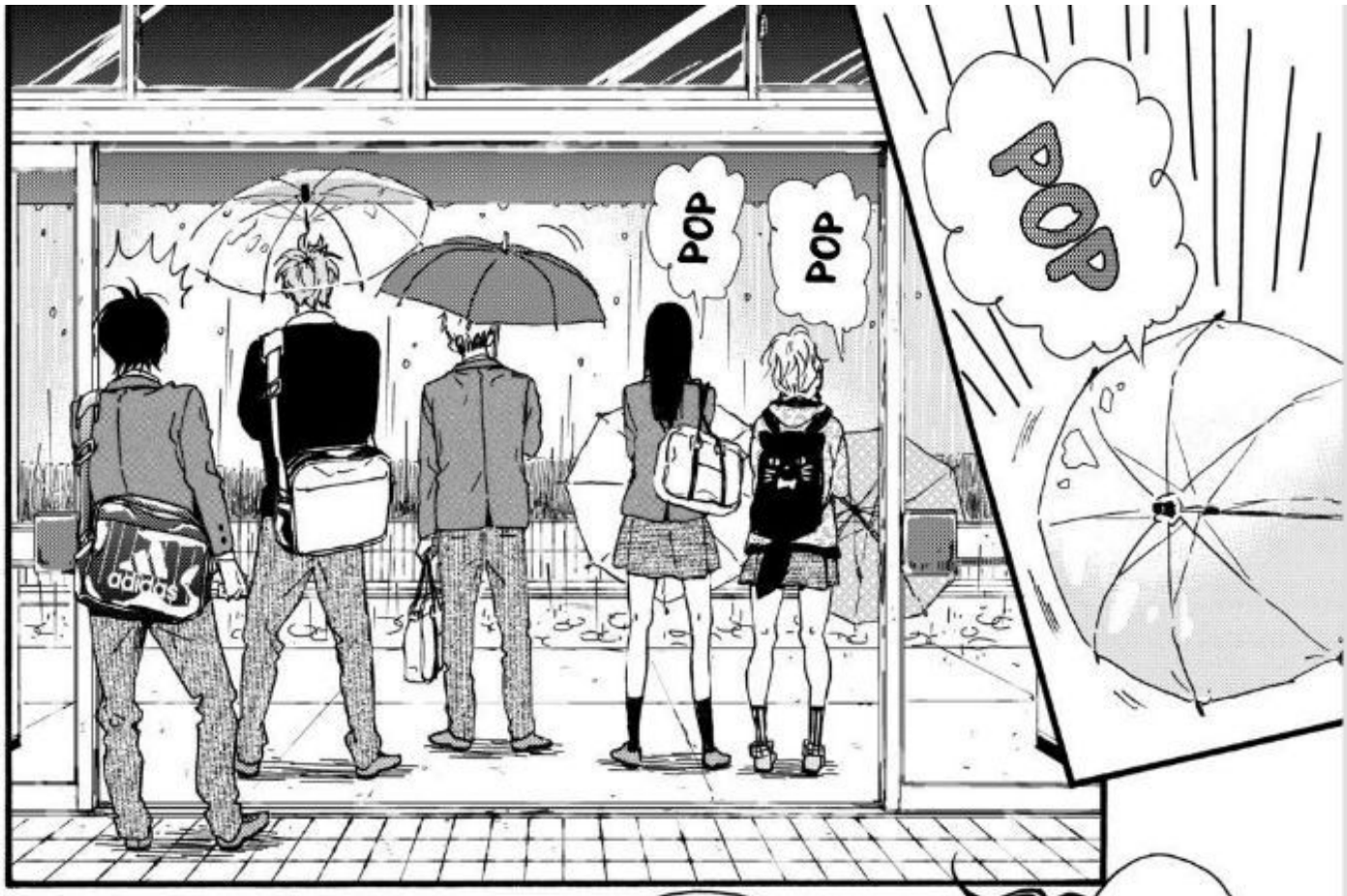
I wonder what would've happened if I hadn't lent my umbrella.

AZU! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
So don't let Kakeru borrow your umbrella!
AAAH! WHAT?! I HAD NO IDEA!

WHAT IS THIS?! IT'S SO CUTE!
I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE, SO JUST ROLL WITH IT!
YOU SHOULDN'T GIVE ME AN UMBRELLA!
THEN DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT IT.
HM?
HEY, HAGITA.
WHY'D YOU GIVE ME AN UMBRELLA?


CHORTLE
THE BICKERING MARRIED COUPLE...
AND THEY'RE OFF.

AH.
RAIN.
WELL, THIS SUCKS.
SSSSHHHH
DRIP
DRIP


POP
POP
POP

THE WEATHER REPORT CALLED FOR RAIN.
IT DID NOT! IT SAID SUNNY!

WHY ARE ALL YOU GUYS CARRYING UMBRELLAS?
WAIT.

WHY?
OKAY, THEN... HAGITA-KUN...
UGH... COME ON...

FORGET IT!
LET ME SHARE WITH YOU.
WHY NOT?

AZU! LEND ME YOUR UMBRELLA.
NO WAY!
WHY NOT? YOU JUST GOT A NEW ONE FROM HAGITA-KUN.
LET ME USE ONE OF THEM.
NO!
I'M GOING TO TREASURE THIS, NOT USE IT!
DO YOU KNOW HOW RARE IT IS TO GET A PRESENT FROM HAGITA?
WHAT'S THE POINT IF YOU DON'T USE IT?
NEVER MIND!
KAKERU...

I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU.
I'LL SHARE WITH AZU...
WANT TO USE MINE?
LET'S WALK HOME TOGETHER.
SHARE WITH ME...
EH...?
UM...
HUH?

SURE.
WALKING TOGETHER LIKE THIS...
NOW THAT'S A SHARED UMBRELLA!
A LITTLE FURTHER.
MAYBE THIS'LL DO IT.
...OUR SHOULDERS CAN'T HELP BUT BRUSH AGAINST EACH OTHER...
...MEANS THAT...
#SSSSS#

NAHO...
ドキ
THUMP
DON'T STAND SO FAR AWAY.
EH?
YOU'LL GET WET.
EH?
SCOOCH CLOSER TO ME.
!
FUWAP
MY FACE...
AAAH!

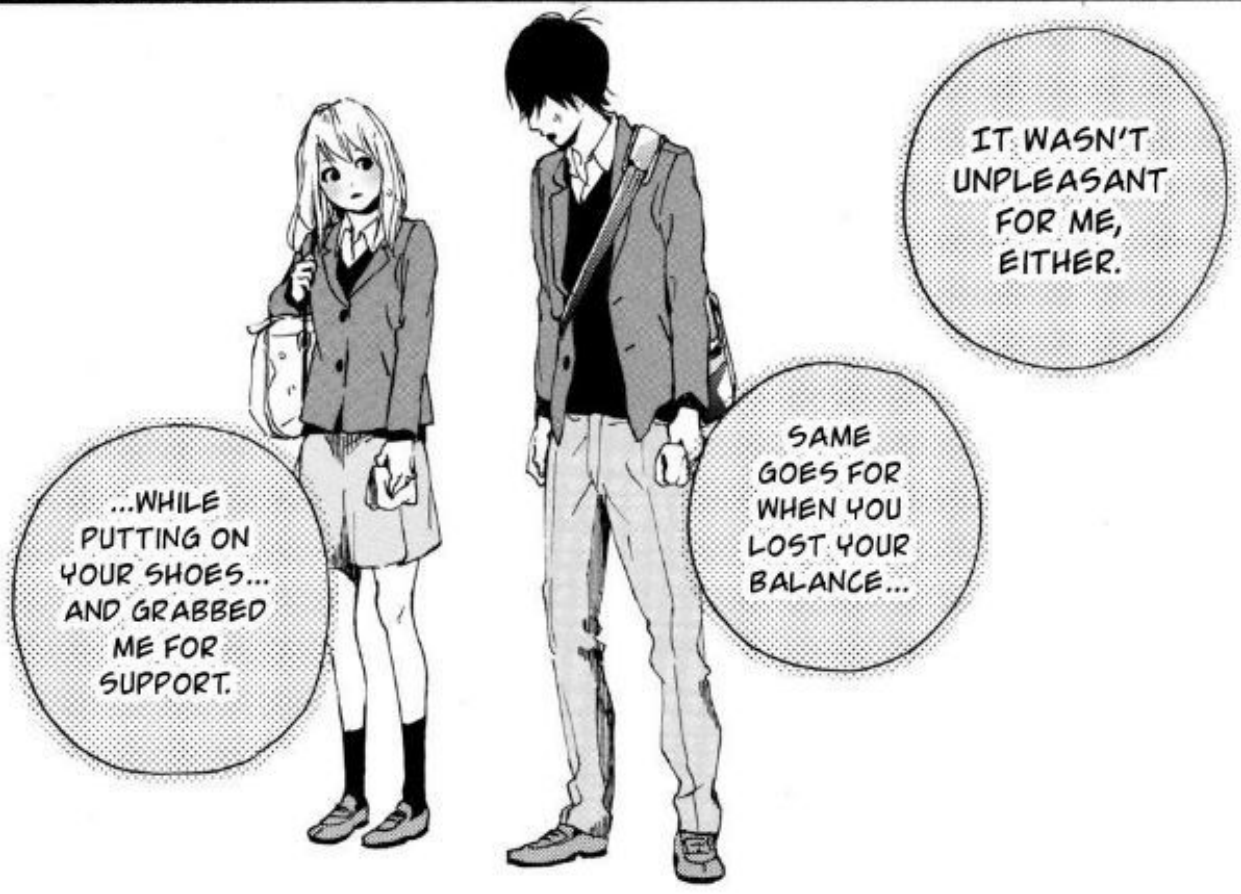
THE UMBRELLA...
S...
SORRY...
YOU STARTLED ME...

SHALL WE TAKE SHELTER FROM THE RAIN?
THIS WON'T WORK.
OF COURSE NOT.
WITHOUT THE LETTER, THINGS DON'T GO SMOOTHLY.

THANKS.
DON'T WORRY, IT'S A NEW ONE!
OH!
YOU USE IT, NAHO.
I HAVE ANOTHER ONE, SO...
WHY TWO?
KAKERU... TRY USING THIS.
A HAND-KERCHIEF.
IT WAS MY FAULT, TOO.
YOU DIDN'T LIKE...
...SHARING AN UMBRELLA?
SORRY...
REALLY...
IT'S OKAY.

THAT'S NOT IT.
I WAS JUST NERVOUS.
SORRY.
I DON'T THINK MY HEART HAS EVER BEATEN FASTER...
IT'S THE MOST NERVOUS I'VE BEEN SO FAR...
IS THIS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE WHEN YOU'RE DATING?
WE WERE SO CLOSE... OUR VOICES SO CLOSE...

WELL... IF IT IS...
IT WASN'T UNPLEASANT.


IT WASN'T UNPLEASANT FOR ME, EITHER.
SAME GOES FOR WHEN YOU LOST YOUR BALANCE...
...WHILE PUTTING ON YOUR SHOES... AND GRABBED ME FOR SUPPORT.

IT WASN'T A BOTHER AT ALL.
I... I DOUBT IT.
I'M SURE THAT WAS A BOTHER.

IN FACT...
...IT MADE ME PRETTY HAPPY.

WHAT AM I SAYING?
This is embarrassing...
KAKERU...

HE COMMUNICATES HIS FEELINGS SO CLEARLY.
KAKERU IS ALWAYS OPEN.
ALWAYS STRAIGHT-FORWARD.
"LET'S HOLD HANDS."
BUT HE WASN'T ABLE TO SAY,
MAYBE KAKERU...
...WAS NERVOUS, TOO.
MAYBE HE'S...
...JUST LIKE ME.

...WHO WAS ANXIOUS ALL THE TIME.
I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE...

I WON'T TAKE IT.
THAT'S ENOUGH.
...WE ALREADY HELD HANDS AT THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.
AFTER ALL...
ONCE IS ENOUGH?

KAKERU...

SORRY.
HE'S BLUSHING.

...IF YOU DON'T SAY ANYTHING, I WON'T KNOW THAT YOU WANT TO!
WELL, AFTER ALL...

YOU USUALLY WON'T HOLD HANDS WITH ME...
...SO I WAS BEING MEAN.

...I BET I'M BLUSHING MORE THAN HE IS.
WANNA GO OUT?
BUT...

THAT'S OKAY.
IF YOU SAY, "LET'S GO OUT"...
HUH?
...THEN WE'LL GO OUT.

I'M HAPPY...
...EVEN IF WE DON'T GO OUT.

YEAH.
ME, TOO.
BUT THE TRUTH IS...

MAYBE THAT WOULD...

...MAKE US EVEN HAPPIER.

...I KIND OF WANT TO TRY GOING OUT WITH HIM.

CLOSER.

STEP

CLOSER.

EH?

CLOSER.

CLOSER.

NAHO, COME OVER HERE MORE.

?!

IF YOU DON'T DO A GOOD JOB DRYING YOURSELF, YOU'LL BE SOAKED.
AAAH!
WIPE
THAT'S OKAY! I'M FINE!
I'LL DRY MYSELF!
adidas
I WONDER HOW THOSE TWO ARE DOING.

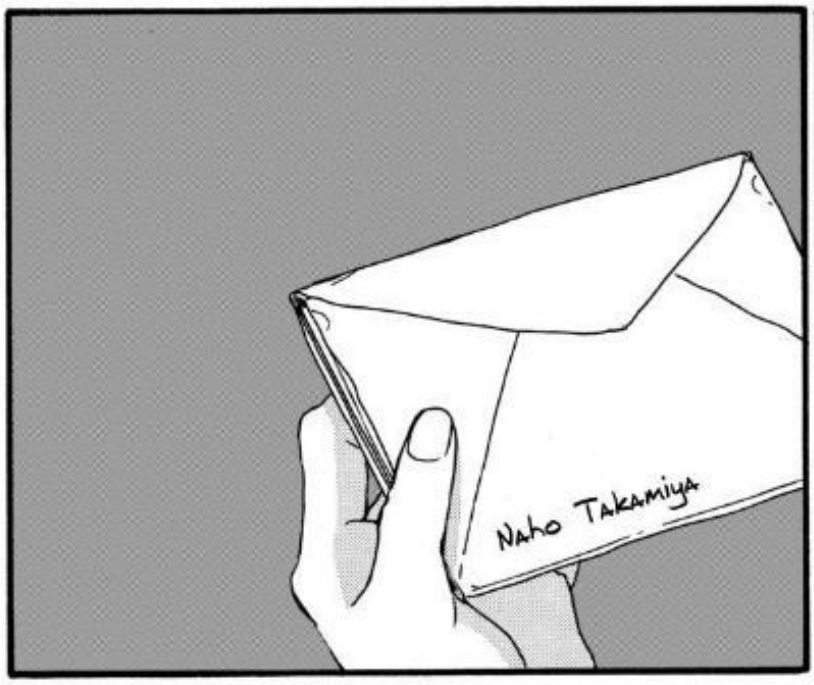
GOOD POINT.
CONSIDERING THOSE TWO.
WITH THOSE TWO, WALKING TOGETHER UNDER ONE UMBRELLA IS A BREAK-THROUGH.
MAYBE THEY HAD A BREAK-THROUGH!
THEY ALWAYS WALK A CERTAIN DISTANCE APART...
...EVEN THOUGH THEY OUGHT TO BE CLOSER.
SO...
...SEEING THEM LIKE THAT MADE ME HAPPY.

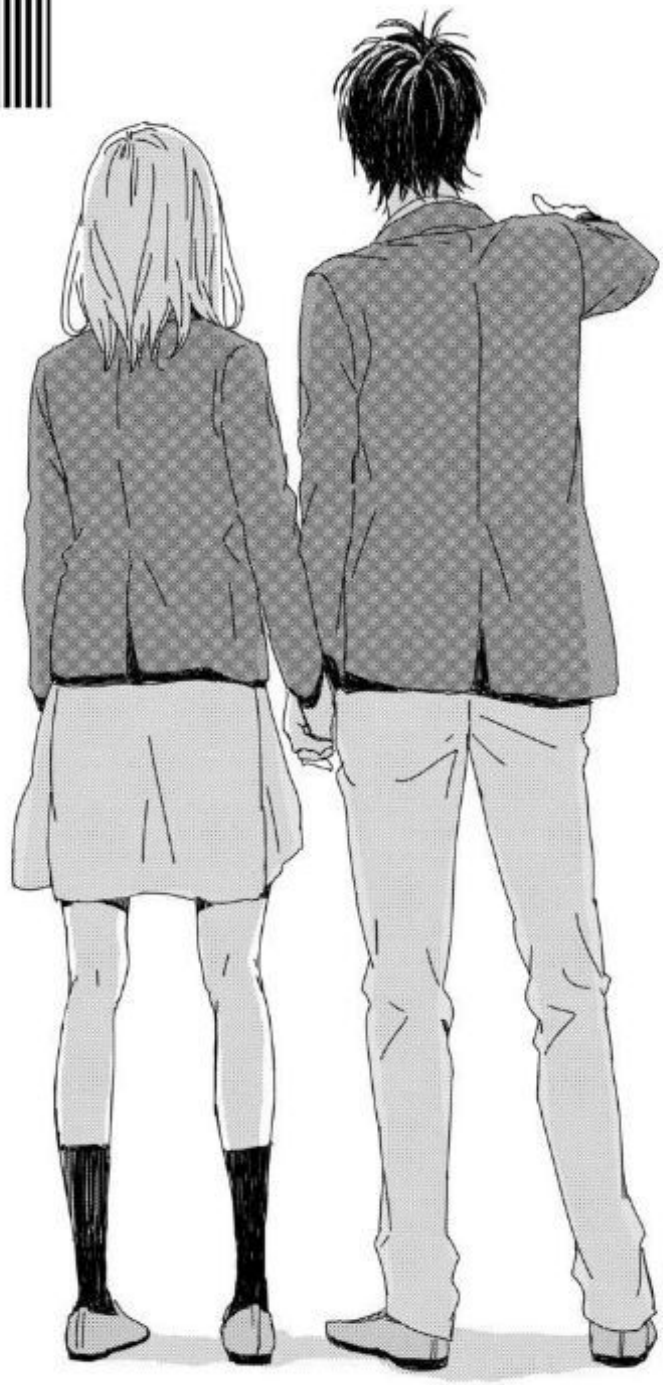
I JUST HOPE...
...WE GET TO SEE THEM LIKE THAT TEN YEARS FROM NOW.
ME, TOO.
SUWA, GIMME A FEW OF YOUR FRIES.
THAT'S MORE THAN A FEW!
THERE IT IS!
HAGITA'S MOOCH ATTACK!
CRAM

I WISH THAT HAPPY TIMES...

...COULD ALWAYS LAST A LONG, LONG TIME.

BUT THAT CAN'T JUST BE A WISH.





CHAPTER 14

Sign: 21st Athletic Festival

TH...
THAT'S...
IT'S FINE. JUST COME HERE.
WAA!

THERE.
GOT IT.

I FEEL LIKE...

DO MINE TOO, OKAY?
THANK YOU.
...THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US HAS SHRUNK.
SURE.
OCTOBER 14TH
THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.
A SLIGHTLY HOT, CLEAR FALL DAY.
OUR CLASS IS IN RED.

MOM AND DAD CAME TO SEE IT.

NAHO...

YOUR MOM AND DAD ARE HERE.

Ah!

THERE THEY ARE!

AWWW... NAHO'S PARENTS MAKE SUCH A GREAT COUPLE.

THEY LOOK SO NICE!

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING!

HAGITA'S FOLKS ARE LIKE MIRROR IMAGES OF EACH OTHER!

Ha ha ha!

WHICH ONE IS YOUR MOM, AGAIN?

THE ONE ON THE RIGHT! YOU KNOW THAT!

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN TAKAKO'S PARENTS.

Looks like he's an actor and she's a model!

MOM, THOSE SUNGLASSES ARE TOO BIG!

HA HA!

AH! AZU, I FOUND YOUR MOM AND LITTLE SISTER!

WHERE'S YOUR DAD?

WORKING.

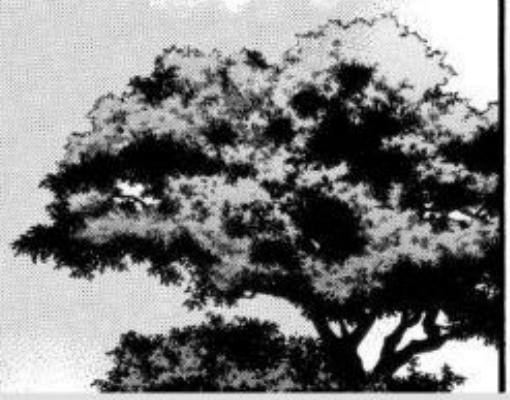
Baking bread.

SUWA, AZU, TAKA-CHAN, AND HAGITA-KUN ALL HAD FAMILY MEMBERS THERE TO WATCH, BUT NO ONE FROM KAKERU'S FAMILY CAME.

ON TOP OF THAT, HE FELL DURING THE RELAY. I'M SURE THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL DIDN'T BECOME A PLEASANT MEMORY FOR HIM.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK ON KAKERU'S FACE AFTER THE RELAY. HE WAS ALMOST AT THE POINT OF TEARS.

THE BLUE TEAM WON THE COMPETITION.



BRING A RELATIVE OF KAKERU'S TO THE FESTIVAL.

MAKE SURE HE HAS FUN, AND DOESN'T FEEL LIKE CRYING.

KAKERU!

YOU CAME?!

SORRY. I SHOULD'VE ASKED YOU...

NO, I DON'T MIND, BUT HOW DID YOU...?

GRANDMA?!

YOU GUYS LIVE FAR FROM HERE, AND I HEARD YOUR GRANDMA DOESN'T DRIVE, SO...
MY DAD ASKED HER IF SHE WANTED A LIFT.
?
I WAS INVITED.

HIROTO ASKED ME TO CALL HER.

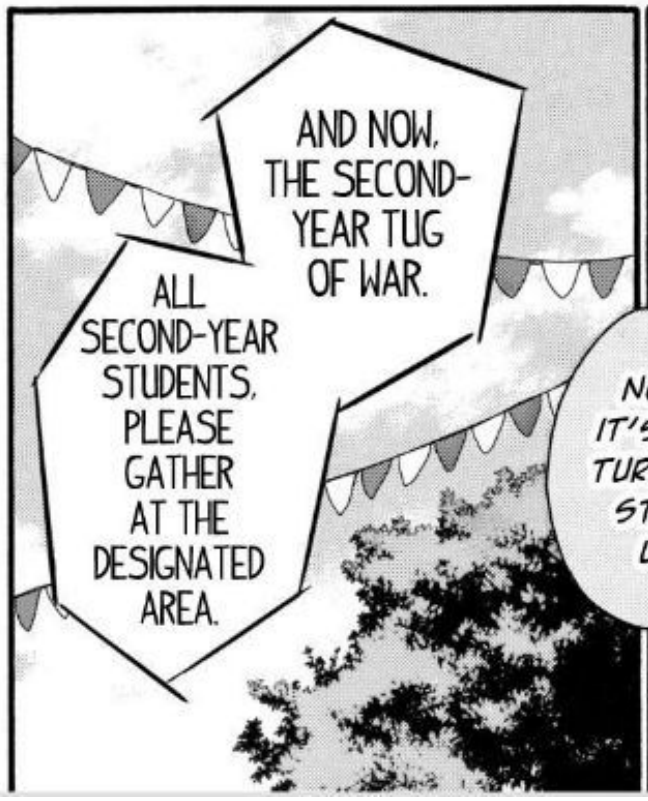
YEAH!
THANK YOU. YOU MADE MY DAY!

DID I DO OKAY?
YOU DID, SUWA?

I'M SO RELIEVED.

IT LOOKS LIKE FOLLOWING THE LETTER'S ADVICE HAS WORKED OUT THIS TIME.

GOOD.



WHAT IS IT, MOM?

NAHO!

DO YOU HAVE A HANDKER-CHIEF AND TISSUES?
I DON'T NEED ALL THAT!
I'VE ALREADY GOT A HAND-KERCHIEF AND TISSUES.
AND BAND-AIDS?
Here.

...WHICH ONE OF THOSE BOYS DO YOU LIKE?

TELL YOU WHAT, I'LL TAKE THE BAND-AIDS.
ALSO...

GLANCE
I DON'T LIKE...
...ANY OF...
WHY?!
EH?!

HE'S LOOKING OVER HERE!!
And she's looking over there!!
I SEE. THAT BOY, HUH?
AAAAH!

I KEPT CALLIN' YOUR NAME. YOU COULDN'T HEAR ME?
WHAT'S WRONG?
HUH?
KAKERU!
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD. BE HONEST.
WHAT?
DO YOU FEEL SICK?
I WAS SPACING OUT.
SORRY.
I'M FINE!
ARE YOU SURE?

...HUH?
TWEET
THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND-YEAR TUG OF WAR ARE...
TWO WINS FOR BLUE, ONE WIN FOR YELLOW, ZERO WINS FOR RED!
AS OF RIGHT NOW, THE BLUE TEAM IS IN THE LEAD!
KYAA!
YEAH!

WE LOST BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE!
SO FRUS-TRATING!
DAMMIT! WE LOST!
EVEN WITH ME THERE, WE COULDN'T DO IT.
KAKERU...

ARE YOU FEELING DOWN?
ニコ
SMILE

I WONDER WHY.
?
THANKS, SUWA.
NO PROB.

KAKERU!
YOUR GRANDMA'S CALLING FOR YOU.

I THINK...
...HE WISHES HIS MOM COULD BE HERE TODAY.

IS KAKERU OKAY?
I KNOW. HE LOOKS GLOOMY.

YEAH.
IT'S PROBABLY HARD TO BELIEVE A LETTER LIKE THAT AT FIRST.

THIS IS ALL BECAUSE I INVITED HIM TO HANG OUT WITH US ON THAT FIRST DAY.
I'M SORRY. IF I'D BELIEVED THE LETTER, I COULD'VE CHANGED WHAT HAPPENED.
ME, TOO... I'M SORRY.

I GUESS HE'S HIDING WHAT HAPPENED TO HER...
...FROM US.

KAKERU SAID...
...HIS MOM IS WORKING TODAY, RIGHT?

...HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT TO DO FOR HIM?
IF KAKERU WON'T TELL US WHAT HE'S FEELING...
KAKERU...
ARE YOU UNDER THE WEATHER?
YOU LOOK A LITTLE OUT OF SORTS.
HUH?
REALLY?
I FEEL FINE.

OH? WELL, IF YOU SAY SO...
SUWA-SAN SAID HE'S TAKING SOME PHOTOS OF YOU.

I'M CAPTURING ALL OF YOUR MANLY MOMENTS, KAKERU-KUN!
SO KEEP IT UP FOR THE NEXT EVENT!
SERIOUS-LY?!
That's kind of embar-rassing...

...I'VE ONLY BEEN TO ONE OF YOUR ATHLETIC FESTIVALS, WHEN YOU WERE IN KINDERGARTEN.
BEFORE THIS...
YEAH.
YOU CAME TO TOKYO TO SEE IT.

I WANT YOU...
...TO HAVE A GOOD TIME TODAY, KAKERU.
BECAUSE YOUR MOTHER'S WATCHING, TOO.

...YEAH.

THIS COULD BE A HARD DAY FOR KAKERU.

...THERE ARE MOTHERS EVERYWHERE.

IF YOU LOOK OUT OVER THE GROUNDS...

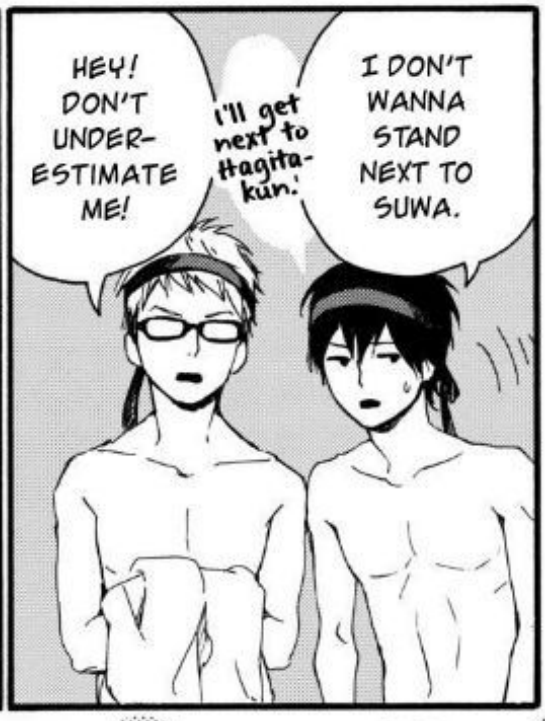
I'VE ALSO ALWAYS FELT REGRET...

...THAT WE COULDN'T SAVE KAKERU'S MOM.

bo-taoshi: pole-toppling game

I... I AM NOT!
YOU'RE EMBARRASSED.
YOU'RE BLUSHING DOWN TO YOUR NECK.
THAT'S JUST SUNBURN!

I'VE GOT WAY MORE DEFINITION THAN YOU, KAKERU!
WHAT THE...?! HE DREW A SIX-PACK ON HIMSELF!

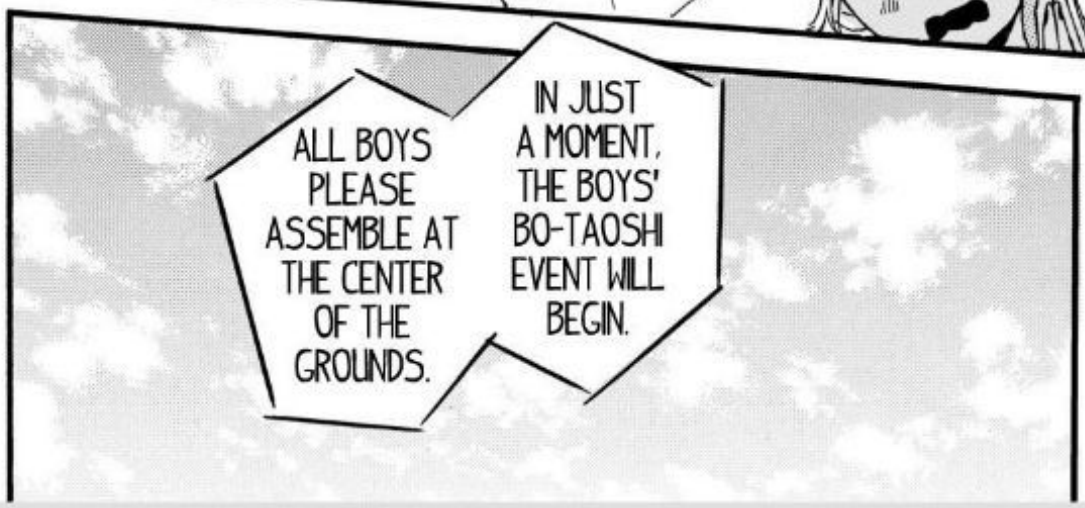

HEY! DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME!
I'll get next to Hagita-kun!
I DON'T WANNA STAND NEXT TO SUWA.

PFFT
HA HA HA!
WAIT A SECOND. PERMANENT MARKER?
SO THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED THE PERMANENT MARKER FOR!

KAKERU...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MMF...
HUH?
NOT THAT.
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE MUSCLES LIKE SUWA, AND I CAN'T BE RELIED ON FOR...
KAKERU...
THAT'S NOW WHAT I MEANT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
DO YOU THINK I LOOK WEAK?

TH...
THAT'S CLOSE...
SORRY.

Hug him, you dolt!


ALL BOYS PLEASE ASSEMBLE AT THE CENTER OF THE GROUNDS.
IN JUST A MOMENT, THE BOYS' BO-TAOSHI EVENT WILL BEGIN.

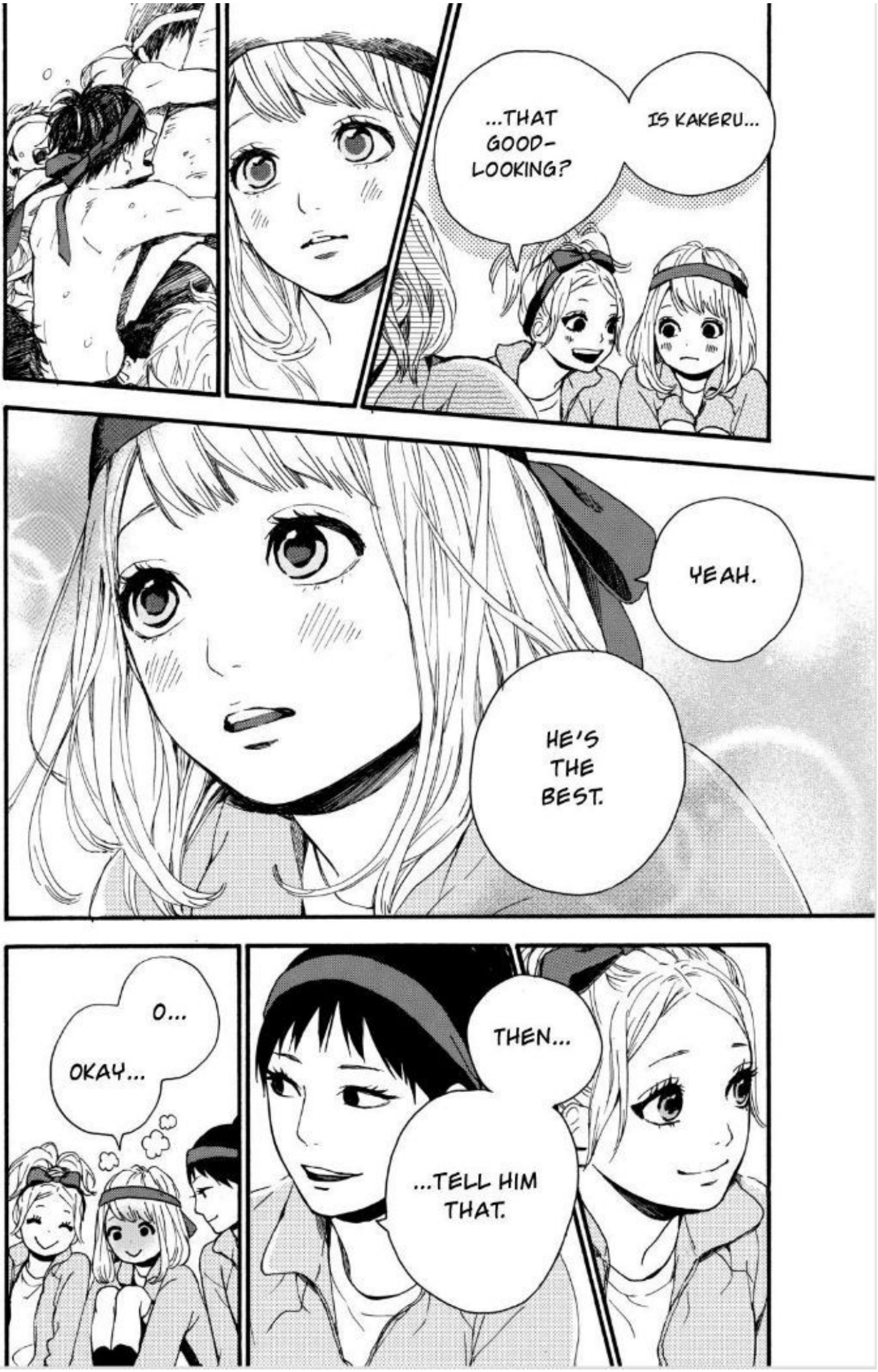
THIS TIME...
...THE LETTER'S ADVICE DIDN'T WORK WELL, EITHER.
...I BET KAKERU WASN'T ABLE TO STAY FOCUSED FOR THE RELAY, EITHER.
IF HE WAS LIKE THIS THEN...
HEY, KAKERU.
...BEFORE THE RELAY STARTS.
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP...

WELL, WHAT IF SOME OTHER GUY TELLS HER HE'S IN LOVE WITH HER?
WORRIED?
AREN'T YOU WORRIED SHE'LL START DATING SOMEONE ELSE?
ABOUT NOT GOING OUT WITH NAHO.
AREN'T YOU WORRIED?
AFTER ALL...
...I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'LL BE HERE.
I'D BE MORE WORRIED IF WE DID DATE.
OH, THAT.
WHY'S THAT?

AND THAT'D BE HARD ON NAHO.
I MIGHT MOVE AGAIN.
MAYBE TO TOKYO... MAYBE SOMEWHERE FARTHER AWAY.
IF WE STARTED DATING, I MIGHT SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR.
ARE YOU TELLIN' ME...
...THAT'S WHY YOU TWO AREN'T GOIN' OUT?
KAKERU.
HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL?
WHAT IF YOU DID GO AWAY AND SOMEBODY ELSE SNATCHED UP NAHO?

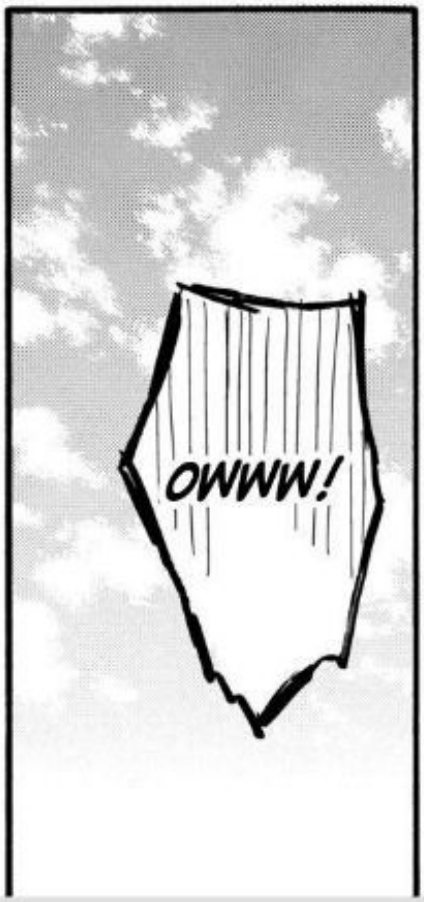
YOU WOULDN'T MIND...
...IF I WENT OUT WITH NAHO?
NOPE.
IN FACT, I THINK THAT'D BE A GOOD IDEA.

NAHO...
YOU HAD YOUR EYE ON KAKERU THE WHOLE TIME!
GASP
NAHO REALLY DOES PREFER KAKERU OVER SUWA, RIGHT?


...THAT GOOD-LOOKING?
IS KAKERU...
YEAH.
HE'S THE BEST.
O...
OKAY...
THEN...
...TELL HIM THAT.

I HAVE TO GET THAT ACROSS...
...SO I DON'T HAVE REGRETS LATER.
THE RED TEAM WINS!
OW...
THAT HURTS...
SUWA!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
BLAME THE WOODEN POLE.
YOU'RE ALL SCRATCHED UP!

THEN WHY DID YOU TAKE THEM OFF?
I CAN'T SEE A THING WITHOUT MY GLASSES.
...SO IT SEEMS THE SENIORS TARGETED HIM.
SUWA'S TALL AND LOOKS STRONG...
HAGITA, YOU DON'T HAVE A SCRATCH!
I KNOW WHERE IT IS.
NAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
I'll just go wash up.
IT'S GOTTA BE AROUND HERE.
THERE'S A FIRST-AID STATION, RIGHT?


OWWW!

I'M IN CHARGE OF FIRST-AID!

I'M ALMOST DONE...
...SO JUST HANG IN THERE.
I CAN'T TAKE THIS SPECIFIC TYPE OF PAIN!
WIMP.
SORRY.

AH!
HOW ABOUT YOU, KAKERU?
ARE YOU HURT?
LET ME SEE IT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
BUT WE SHOULD STILL PUT A BAND-AID ON IT!
OH... THIS IS NOTHING.
YOU'VE GOT A SCRAPE ON YOUR ARM!

I SAID...
...I'M FINE!
...
SORRY...
STEP

...SUWA?
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
KAKERU NEEDS TO HAVE FUN TODAY, AND YET...
DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
...I THINK THIS IS MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
AS A MATTER OF FACT...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT, NAHO.

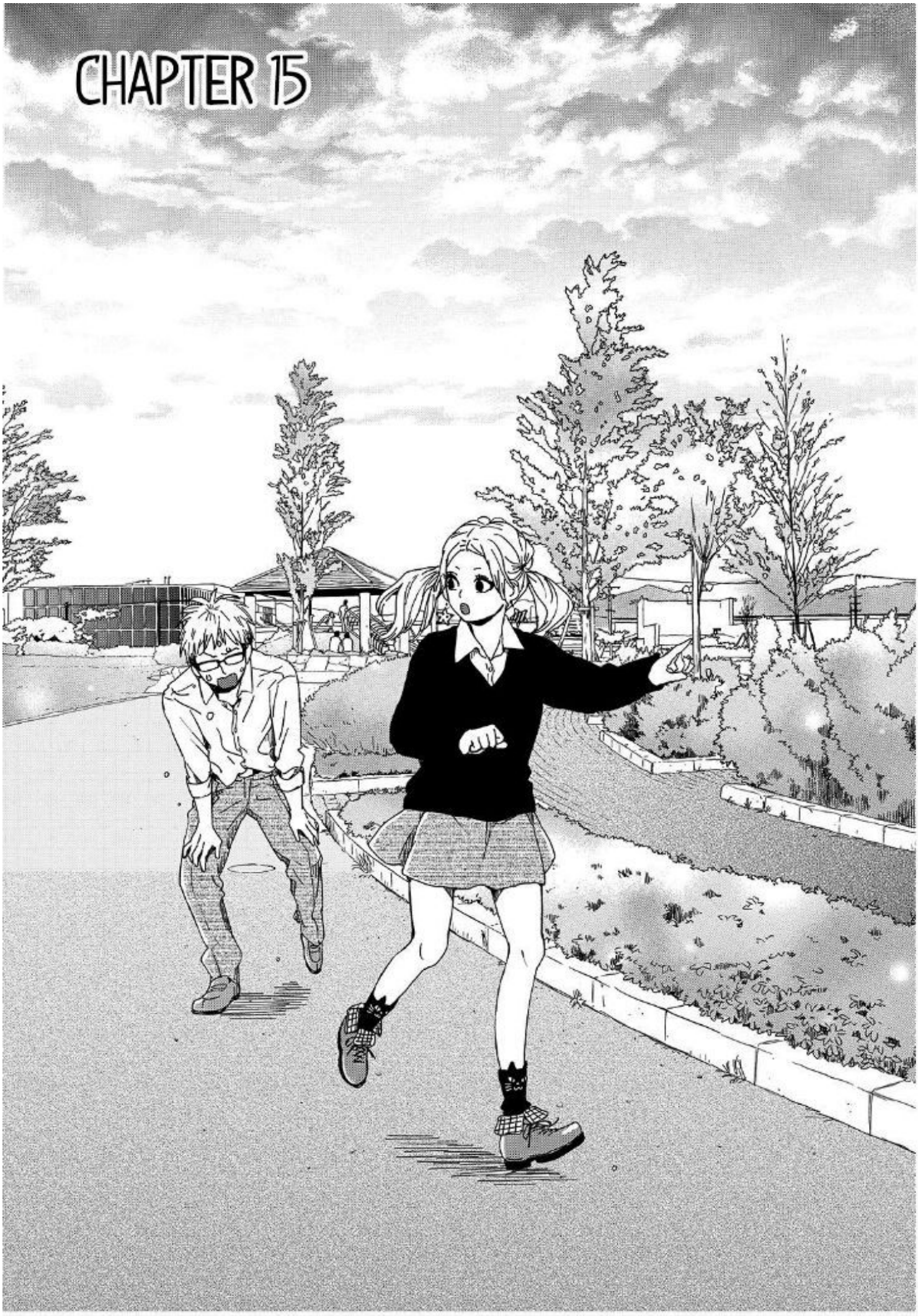
"YOU WOULDN'T MIND...
...IF I WENT OUT WITH NAHO?"

"IN FACT, I THINK THAT'D BE A GOOD IDEA."

"NOPE."

I SAID THAT, AND YET I FEEL SO...

CHAPTER 15



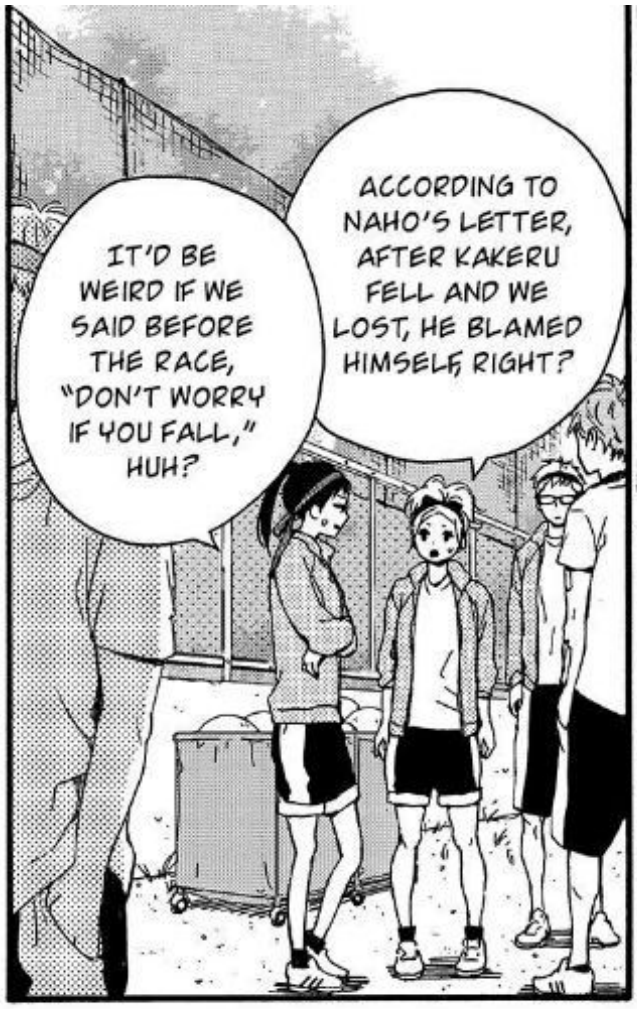
PFFT!
HEADS UP!
THESE ARE OUR UNIFORMS FOR THE CHEER-OFF!
THE RED TEAM'S DOING A CHEERLEADER THEME! CUTE OR WHAT?!
cheers
cheers
cheers
UGH... THIS IS EMBAR-RASSING...
The skirt's short...
NOT AT ALL!
NOT REALLY...
YOU DUMBO!
OF COURSE YOU'RE NOT CUTE!

MAN, THOSE SKIRTS! DID YOU SEE HOW SHORT...?!
SO FRIGGIN' SHORT!
pfft
LET'S GO.
THOSE JERKS.
AT LEAST BE NICE AND SAY WE LOOK CUTE!
THIS AFTERNOON, FOR THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL...
...WE'LL LEAD OFF WITH THE GIRLS' CHEERING BATTLE.
I DON'T WANT IT!
...SO I'LL GIVE YOU ONE OF AZU, HAGITA.
I TOLD MY DAD TO GET SOME SHOTS...

I'LL GIVE YOU NAHO'S PIC, KAKERU.
THANKS...
I WONDER IF KAKERU WAS MAD...
WHAT DID SUWA MEAN BY "THE RIGHT DIRECTION"?
ARE THINGS REALLY OKAY?
Cheers
Cheers
Cheers

NA...
HEY!

...
Sorry... Another odd job...
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO CARRY.
TAKAMIYA, NARUSE...


ACCORDING TO NAHO'S LETTER, AFTER KAKERU FELL AND WE LOST, HE BLAMED HIMSELF, RIGHT?
IT'D BE WEIRD IF WE SAID BEFORE THE RACE, "DON'T WORRY IF YOU FALL," HUH?

HUH? WHERE ARE NAHO AND KAKERU?
THEY WERE ENLISTED.
I HOPE WE CAN PULL OFF THE RELAY...

I THINK...
...KAKERU'S LEG IS ALREADY HURT.

EVEN IF WE SAID, "CAREFUL YOU DON'T FALL"...
...IT'S NOT LIKE THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO CHANGE THE FUTURE.
SO... SO WHAT DO WE DO?

IT'S IN MY LETTER.
NO...

DID KAKERU SAY ANY-THING?
YOU MEAN FROM THE POLE-TOP PLING?
NO WAY!

IT SEEMS HE DIDN'T TELL ANY OF US ABOUT BEING HURT.
HERE IT IS IN MINE...

THE FUTURE ME NOTICED IT BEFORE THE RACE...
...BUT KAKERU SAID HE WAS FINE, SO I DIDN'T STOP HIM.

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING BEFORE?!
YOU WERE AT THE FIRST-AID STATION WITH HIM!
"WHY," YOU ASK...

ANYWAY, LET'S GET OVER TO HIM!
?
...

CARRYING A MATTRESS IS TOUGH WITH TWO PEOPLE.
YEAH...
IT'S HEAVY FOR ME, TOO.
LET'S PUT IT DOWN A SEC.

UGH...
THIS IS HEAVY...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, NAHO?

IDIOT.

GRAB

HOW DID YOU...?
...
...
TELL US!
YOUR LEG IS HURT?
WE DIDN'T REALIZE IT BEFORE.
HURT?
I'M SORRY.

KAKERU.
IS THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL BORING FOR YOU?
OH, IT'S...
...NO BIG DEAL...
...AND WONDERED IF SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED.
...
WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW DOWN YOU SEEM...
WHY?
NOT AT ALL.

IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN...
...STEWING OVER THINGS ALONE.
IT WAS THE SAME THING WITH ME.
WE'D ALL BE HAPPY TO LEND AN EAR.
"WE DON'T WANNA GO AROUND JUST SMILIN' AND NOT KNOWING THAT SOMETHIN'S WEIGHING ON YOUR MIND."
"TALK TO US BECAUSE WE'RE GOOD FRIENDS."
I'VE BEEN LYING TO YOU.
I'M SORRY...

THE REAL REASON...
...MY MOM'S NOT HERE...
...IS BECAUSE SHE'S DEAD.
SO THE REASON YOU'RE DOWN...
...IS THAT YOUR MOTHER COULDN'T COME TODAY?
...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
EVERY TIME WE'RE TOGETHER...
...YOU GUYS MAKE ME WANT TO LAUGH.
I'M...
...NOT SURE IF IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO HAVE FUN.
IF SHE WERE STILL ALIVE, SHE PROBABLY WOULD'VE BEEN HERE.
AFTER ALL, MY MOM COULD BE WATCHING THIS FROM SOME-WHERE.
BUT I FELT LIKE I CAN'T BE THAT WAY TODAY.

SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE DIED.
MY MOM MUST BE SAD RIGHT NO,W WHEREVER SHE IS.
SO I'M NOT SURE IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO LAUGH LIKE I DON'T HAVE A CARE IN THE WORLD.
I'M SURE KAKERU'S BEEN TOR-MENTED...
...ALL THIS TIME...
...WITH REGRET AND A SENSE OF GUILT.

BUT IF YOUR MOTHER'S WATCHING THIS FROM SOME-WHERE...
...TO ERASE THOSE FEELINGS?
WHAT CAN I DO...

...IT'S BETTER IF YOU DO SMILE, RIGHT?

WHY?
WORRY ABOUT ME?
...YOUR MOTHER WILL WORRY ABOUT YOU, TOO.
IF YOU'RE BUMMED OUT...
THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS...
SO FIGURE YOUR MOM IS EVEN MORE WORRIED THAN THAT.
...BUT WE'VE BEEN REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HE ALSO STARES AT YOU ALL THE TIME AND SIGHS.
EVERY TIME SUWA OPENS HIS MOUTH, IT'S "KAKERU THIS" AND "KAKERU THAT."
what is he, a girl?
I DO NOT!
NAHO'S THE ONE...
...WHO'S ALWAYS LOOKIN' AT KAKERU!

IT'S TRUE...
I AM ALWAYS LOOKING AT YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT! FORGET THE CONTESTS! SHE'S WATCHED KAKERU THE WHOLE TIME!
SHE'S SO WORRIED, SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HERSELF!
HUH?
UH...
BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE.
I DO LOOK AT YOU.
WELL...
WE'RE NOT TRYING TO FORCE YOU TO SMILE WHEN THINGS ARE ROUGH...

YEAH...
YOU'VE BEEN LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THE RELAY, RIGHT?
...WHEN YOU'RE ACTUALLY HAVING A GOOD TIME, IT'S OKAY TO SMILE.
BUT...
GO TO FIRST-AID, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD.
YOU'RE NOT FINE.
IT DOESN'T HURT THAT MUCH.
I'M FINE.
...GET THAT LEG TREATED.
THEN BEFORE THE RACE STARTS...

THAT'S OKAY. I CAN CARRY THIS.
WE'LL CARRY THIS THE REST OF THE WAY.
GO WITH NAHO.
WE'RE TELLING YOU NOT TO OVERDO IT!
UH...

...YOU DON'T HAVE TO STRAIN YOURSELF AND CARRY THE WHOLE THING.
IF IT'S HEAVY...
WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

IF EVERYONE GRABS HOLD, IT'S LIGHT AS A FEATHER.
IT'S OKAY.

WE'RE ALL LOOKING AT YOU.
...TO ERASE KAKERU'S REGRET AND ANGUISH...
...BUT...
I KNOW IT WON'T BE EASY...

...I HOPE WE CAN AT LEAST MAKE IT...
...A LITTLE LIGHTER FOR HIM.
SURE I CAN. HE SAID IT WAS JUST A LIGHT SPRAIN.
SERIOUSLY? MAN, YOU CAN'T RUN ON THAT.
A SPRAINED ANKLE?

YOU AND YOUR "I'M OKAY"!
HAGITA-KUN!

IT DOESN'T EVEN HURT NOW THAT IT'S TAPED UP!
I CAN RUN LIKE CRAZY!
See?

...BUT HE SHOULD PROBABLY SIT OUT OF THE RELAY, JUST IN CASE.
SENSEI SAID IT'S OKAY IF HE CAN RUN...
BUT HE SAID IT'S OKAY! DON'T SAY THE NEGATIVE PART!

IF YOUR ANKLE GETS WORSE, YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE FOR A WHILE.
REMEMBER, YOU'VE GOT THE CLUB.
I'LL BE FINE.
ARE YOU SURE IT DOESN'T HURT? AND YOU CAN RUN?
I'M TOTALLY FINE.

I WON'T OVERDO IT.

I'M SURE I WON'T REGRET IT.
WELL...
THEN SHALL WE...
...ALL RUN TOGETHER?

YOU'RE NOT HURT!
IT COULD BE A SPRAIN.
MY ANKLE HURTS.

THIS IS GONNA BE FUN!
RIGHT, HAGITA?!
...
WHAT'S WRONG, HAGITA?

...THE CLASS RELAY RACE!
AND NOW WE COME TO THE FINAL EVENT OF TODAY'S ATHLETIC FESTIVAL...
GOOD LUCK!
AZU, NAHO, AND TAKA-CHAN, FIGHT!
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!
WIN THIS, NARUSE!

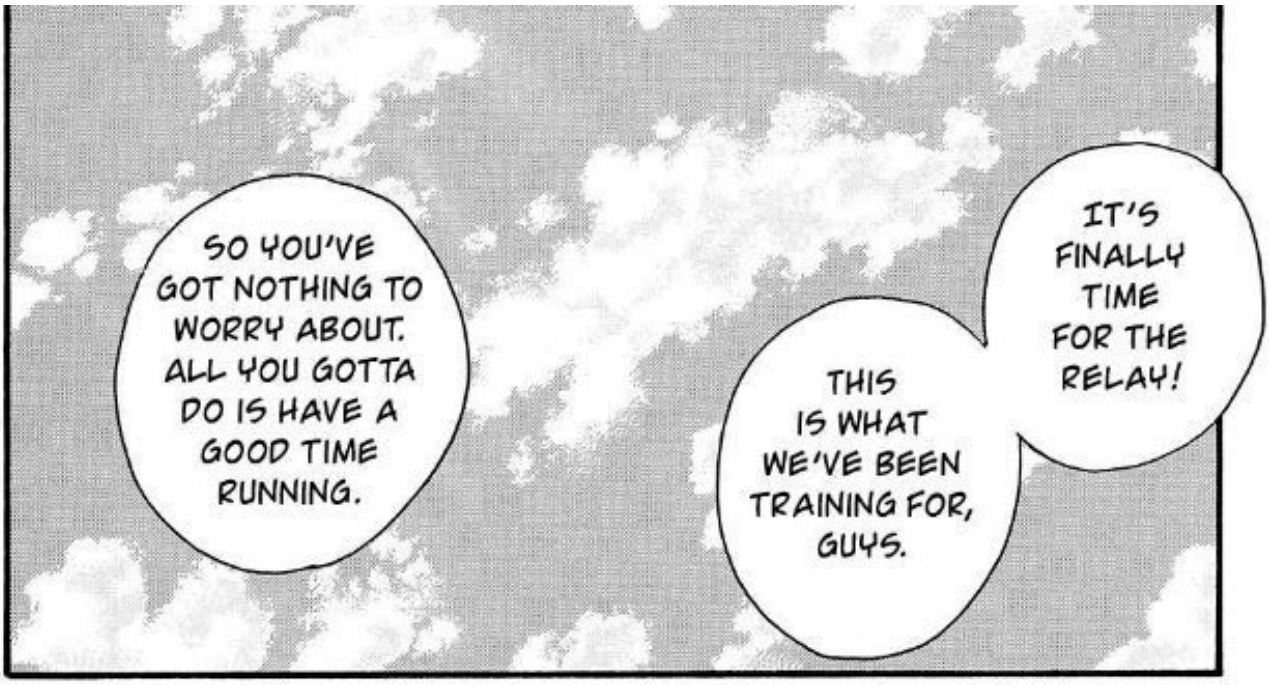
WHAT?
RUSTLE
スル
12

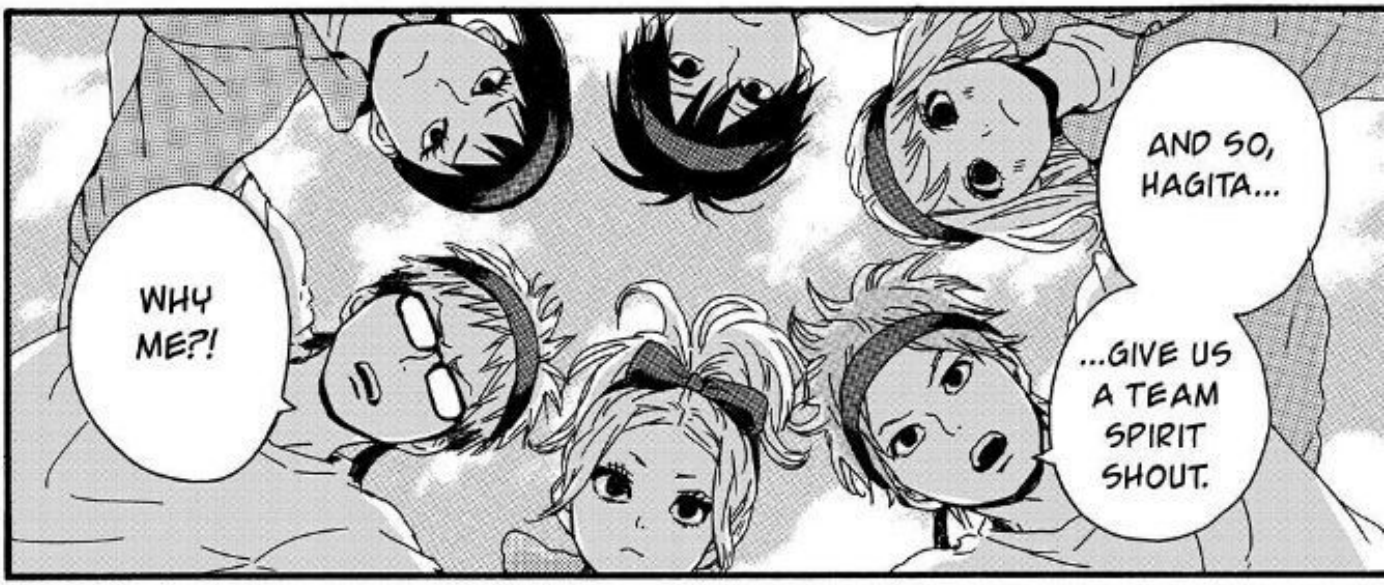
CHEER FOR ME, TOO.
SUWA, TAKE FIRST PLACE!
KAKERU.

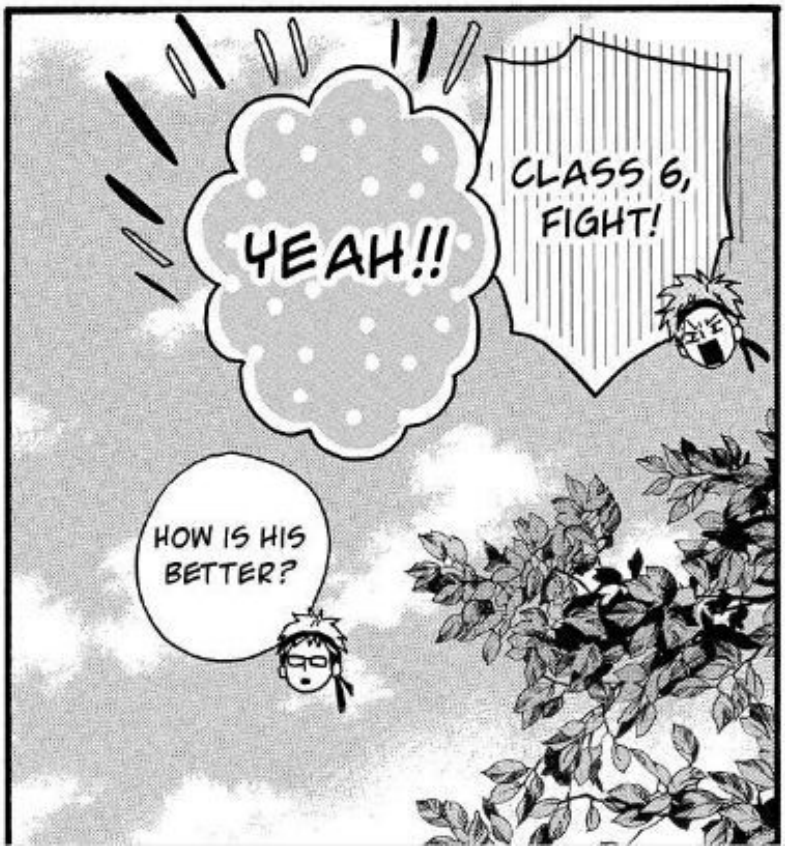
DO YOU...
...WANT TO SWITCH?
I MEAN...
LET'S SWITCH.

PLEASE...
...A GREAT BIG SMILE.
...LET KAKERU HAVE...

CHAPTER 16

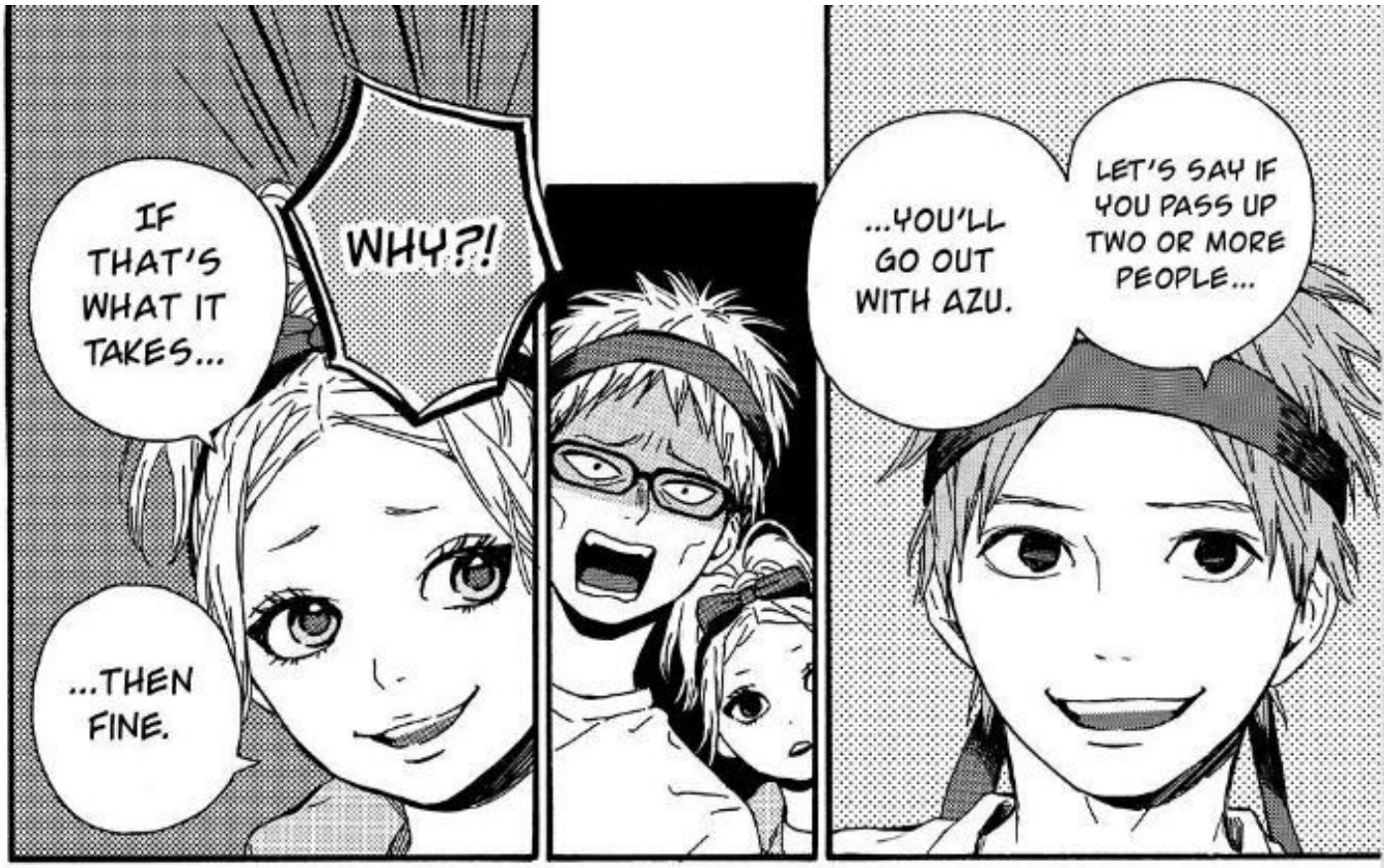

SO YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS HAVE A GOOD TIME RUNNING.
THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN TRAINING FOR, GUYS.
IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR THE RELAY!


WHY ME?!
AND SO, HAGITA...
...GIVE US A TEAM SPIRIT SHOUT.

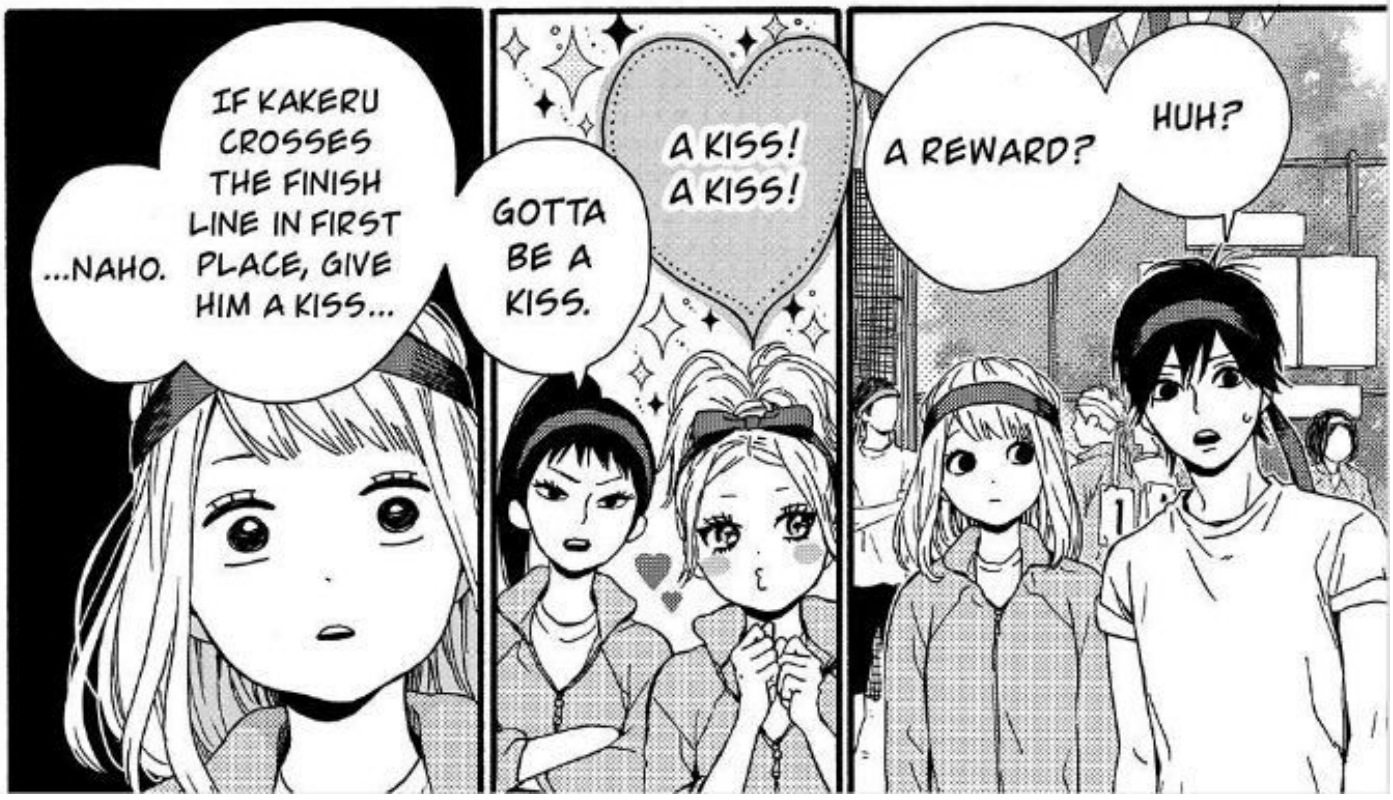

YEAH!!
CLASS 6, FIGHT!
HOW IS HIS BETTER?

...
HEY HEY HO!!

YOU'D BETTER REMEMBER...
...THAT PROMISE.
HEY.
AZU.
NO, WE'RE NOT GOIN' OUT!!
YOU TWO WERE PRACTICING TOGETHER AGAIN? ARE YOU GOING OUT?
WELL, YOU OUGHTA.
"THAT PROMISE"?
WHEN WE WERE PRACTICING AT THE PARK YESTERDAY...
...I PROMISED HIM A FREE TREAT FROM MY FAMILY'S BAKERY FOR EVERY PERSON HE PASSES IN THE RELAY.


IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES...
WHY?!
...THEN FINE.
...YOU'LL GO OUT WITH AZU.
LET'S SAY IF YOU PASS UP TWO OR MORE PEOPLE...

AND HOW ABOUT IF NAHO GIVES KAKERU SOME KIND OF REWARD?
DON'T ACT SO SHY.
NOT "FINE"!
THAT'S MORE LIKE A PUNISH-MENT!

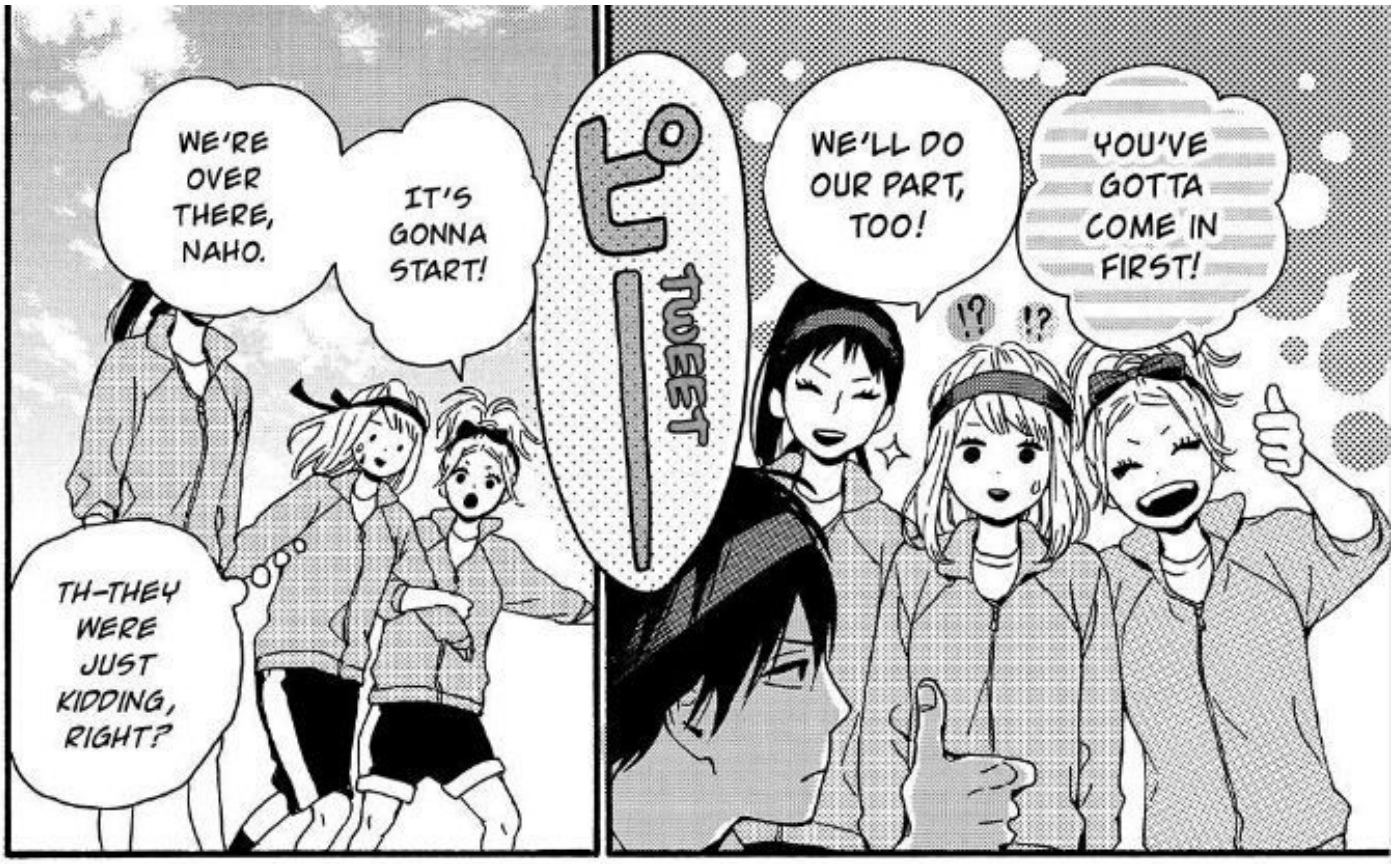

...NAHO.
IF KAKERU CROSSES THE FINISH LINE IN FIRST PLACE, GIVE HIM A KISS...
GOTTA BE A KISS.
A KISS! A KISS!
A REWARD?
HUH?

I LIKE THE IDEA.
BUT IF KAKERU DOESN'T TAKE FIRST PLACE...
...I GET A KISS FROM NAHO!

WHOA, WHOA, WHOA.
what?!
THAT'S ASKING TOO MUCH.
You can tell by Naho's voice...

WHY THE HECK...?
?!

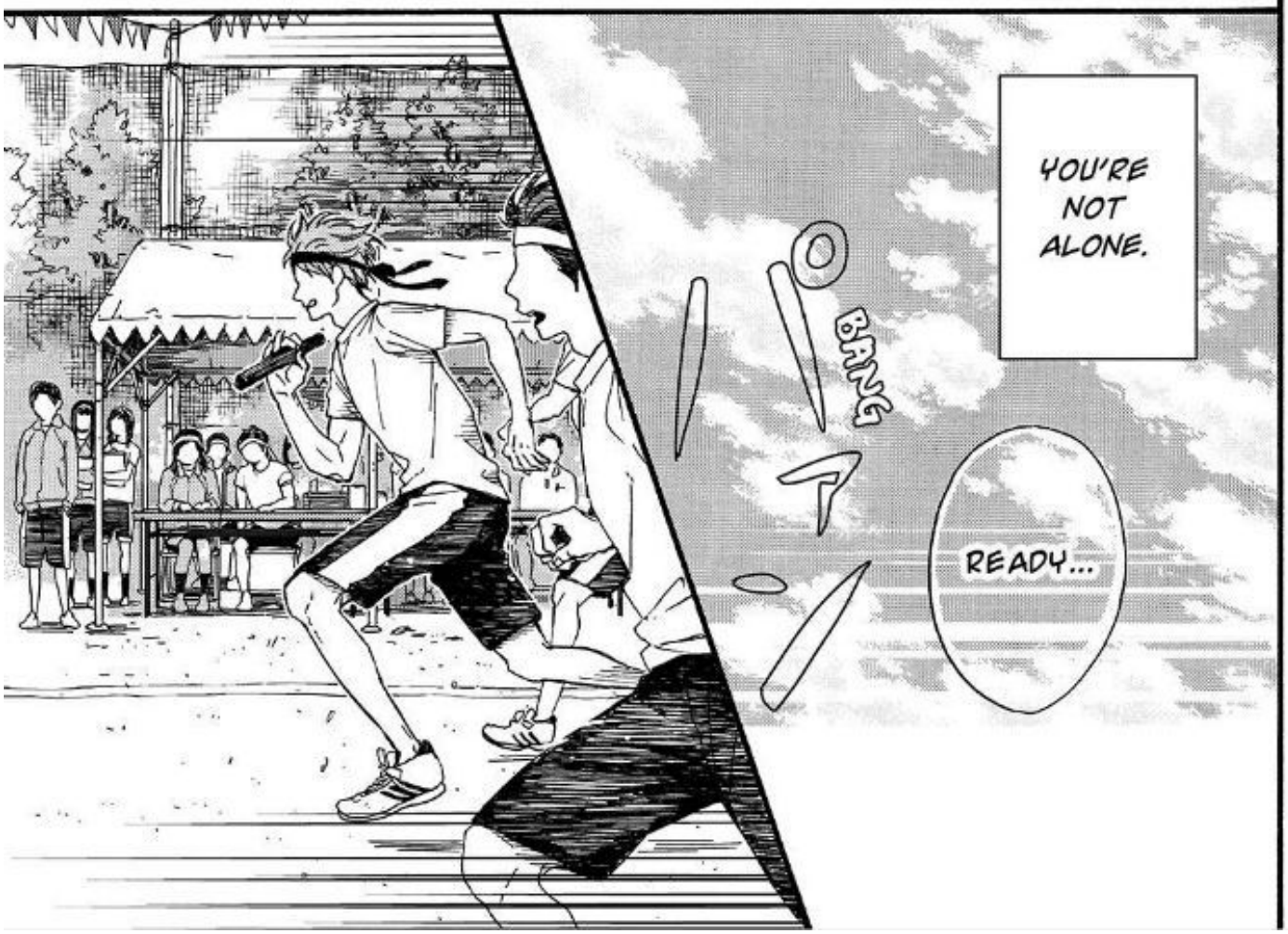
WELL, I'M DEFINITELY COMING IN FIRST.


WE'RE OVER THERE, NAHO.
IT'S GONNA START!
TH-THEY WERE JUST KIDDING, RIGHT?
ピー
TWEET
WE'LL DO OUR PART, TOO!
YOU'VE GOTTA COME IN FIRST!
!? !?

NO ONE WILL BLAME YOU.

...IT WON'T BE YOUR FAULT, KAKERU.

EVEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENS...



IN THE FIRST LEG, CLASS 6 IS IN THE LEAD.
WOW!
LOOK AT SUWA GO!
RUN!
JUST DO YOUR BEST.
3
TAKAKO!
PASS A MESSAGE ON TO KAKERU!
"DON'T LOSE!"

CLASS 2 IS FAST! THEY'VE JUST PASSED CLASS 6 AND ARE NOW IN FIRST PLACE!
YOU CAN DO IT!
TAKAKO!
TCH!
DO YOUR BEST.
PASS A MESSAGE ON TO KAKERU!
"DON'T LOSE!"

"REMEMBER THE DEAL!"
DO YOUR BEST!
SORRY...
PASS A MESSAGE ON TO KAKERU!
6

"REMEMBER THE DEAL!"
"DON'T LOSE!"
CLASS 6 HAS SLIPPED TO LAST PLACE!
"WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!"
I knew it!!
I FIGURED HAGITA WOULD BLOW IT!
AAAH!
DO YOUR BEST!

DO YOUR BEST!
DO YOUR BEST!
PASS A MESSAGE... ON TO KAKERU!
"DON'T LOSE!"
"REMEMBER THE DEAL!"
"WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!"

"EVEN TEN YEARS FROM NOW!"
THANK YOU...
...EVERY-ONE.
THIS WOULDN'T HAVE GONE WELL IF I'D BEEN ON MY OWN.
I'LL GIVE HIM THE MESSAGE.
TOGETHER...
...WE'LL CHANGE...

KAKERU!
...THE FUTURE!
I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM EVERYONE!
"DON'T LOSE!"
"WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER!"
"REMEMBER THE DEAL!"

"EVEN TEN YEARS FROM NOW..."
"...WE'LL BE..."
"...WAITING FOR YOU!"

WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU!

3
RIGHT NOW, CLASS 2 IS IN THE LEAD!
THE ANCHORS ARE RUNNING THE FINAL LAP!
...AND ALL OF US WILL HELP YOU."
"IF THINGS ARE ROUGH, JUST SAY SO...
"I WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RELAY, TOO..."
"ME TOO."
"ME TOO!"
CLASS 6 IS CLOSING IN FROM BEHIND!
"I WANT TO RUN TOGETHER, TOO."
"IF IT'S HEAVY...
...YOU DON'T HAVE TO STRAIN YOURSELF AND CARRY THE WHOLE THING."
"ME TOO."

"WE'RE HERE TO HELP."
2

YEAHHH!
CLASS 6 TAKES FIRST PLACE!
THANKS, KAKERU!
AMAZING!
YOU WERE GREAT, KAKERU!
KAKERU, THAT WAS AWESOME!
THAT WAS SO COOL, KAKERU!
KA-KERU...

YOU DID IT...
I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU.

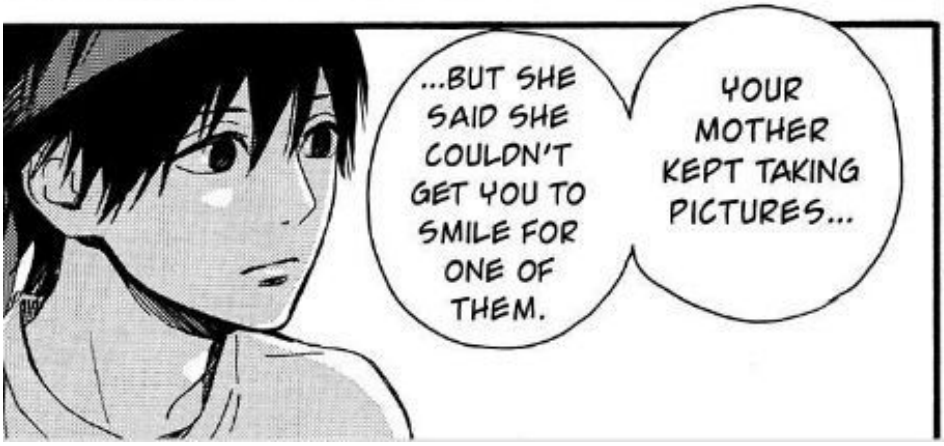
カシャ
FLASH
...THE RED TEAM!
THE WINNER OF THE 21ST ATHLETIC FESTIVAL IS...

THE RELAY...
...WAS WONDERFUL.
CONGRAT-ULATIONS.
IT'S THANKS TO THEM.

YOUR FATHER HAD JUST LEFT THE FAMILY...
...SO HE DIDN'T GO TO THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

YOU WERE BLUE THE WHOLE TIME.

THIS REMINDS ME OF THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL WHEN YOU WERE IN PRESCHOOL.
IT DOES?


YOUR MOTHER KEPT TAKING PICTURES...
...BUT SHE SAID SHE COULDN'T GET YOU TO SMILE FOR ONE OF THEM.

I FEEL TERRIBLE ABOUT IT.
TO HAVE HIS PARENTS DIVORCE WHEN HE'S THAT YOUNG...
I HOPE KAKERU IS OKAY.
YOUR MOTHER...
...WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU THE WHOLE TIME.
WHEN YOUR MOTHER SAW THAT...
...SHE WAS SO HAPPY.
BUT...
...IN THE FINAL RACE...
...YOU WON FIRST PLACE, KAKERU.
1
YOU FINALLY...
...SMILED.

AND I'M SURE...
...SHE'S JUST AS HAPPY FOR YOU...
...RIGHT NOW.
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.
...YEAH.

MAKE THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL SO MUCH FUN THAT KAKERU WON'T EVEN THINK OF CRYING.

IT WORKED OUT...

...THIS WAY.

...UNSURPRISINGLY...

...BUT...

NOT EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN THE LETTER WAS CORRECT...

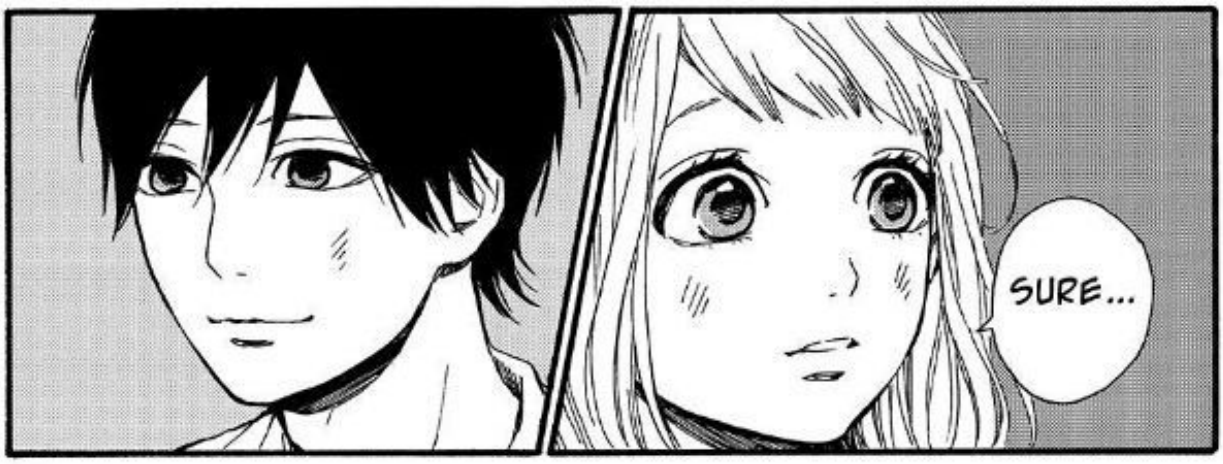
NAHO!

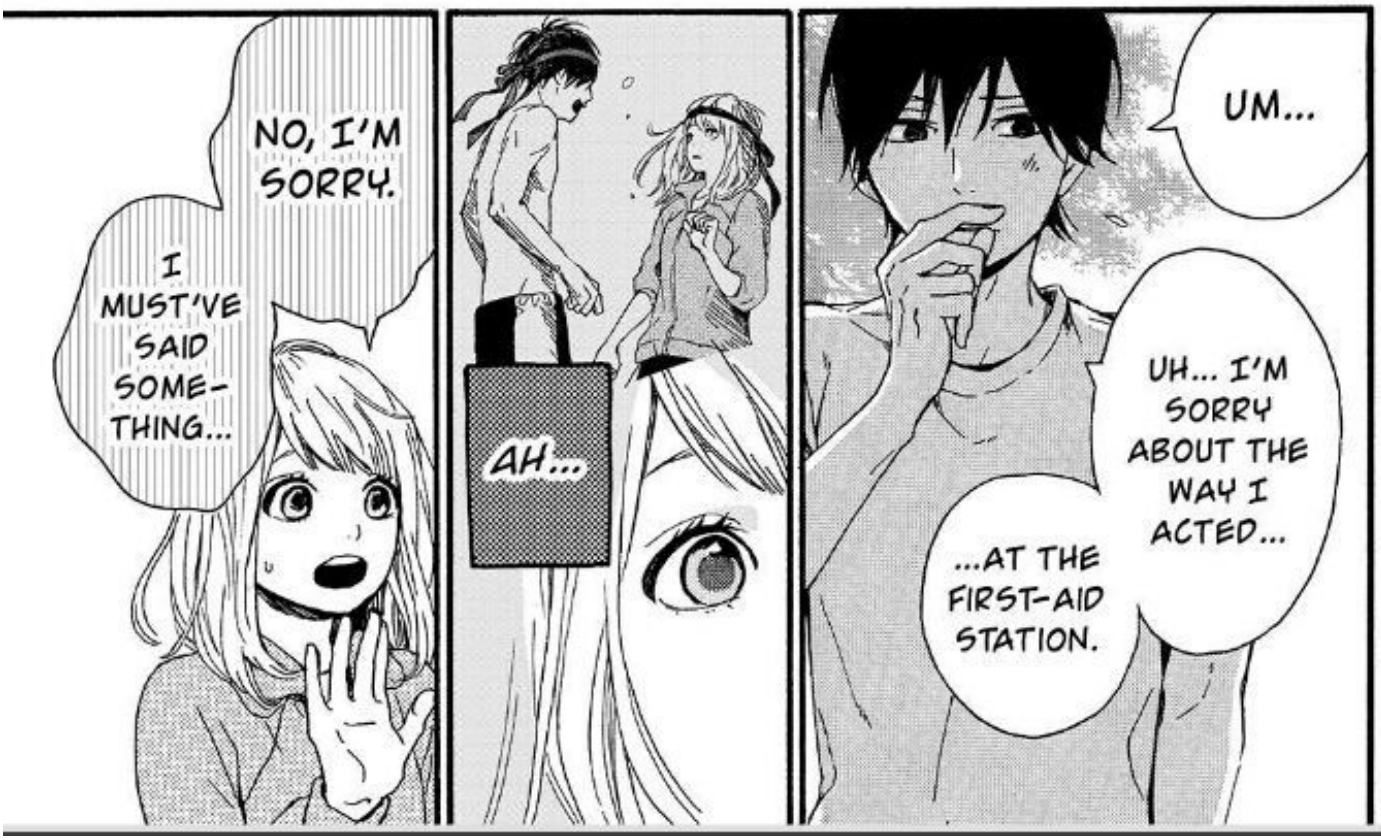
BRING KAKERU'S FAMILY TO THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL, TOO.

...THE LETTER STILL...

...WASN'T WRONG.

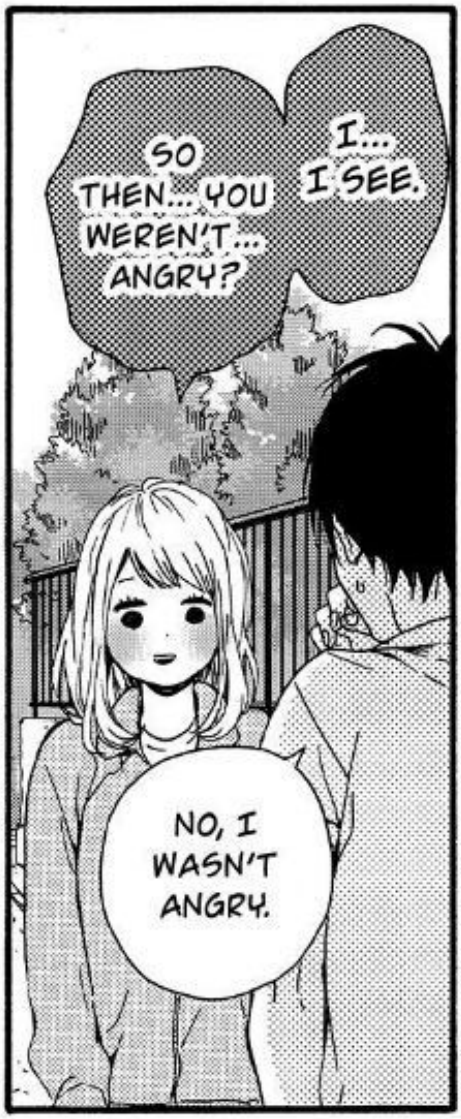
CAN I KEEP IT?
AH!
THAT'S RIGHT!
ABOUT...
...THE HEAD-BAND...


SURE...


NO, I'M SORRY.
I MUST'VE SAID SOME-THING...
AH...
UM...
UH... I'M SORRY ABOUT THE WAY I ACTED...
...AT THE FIRST-AID STATION.

YOU GAVE FIRST-AID TO SUWA...
...AND I FELT... HOW CAN I PUT IT?
THAT IT WASN'T FAIR...

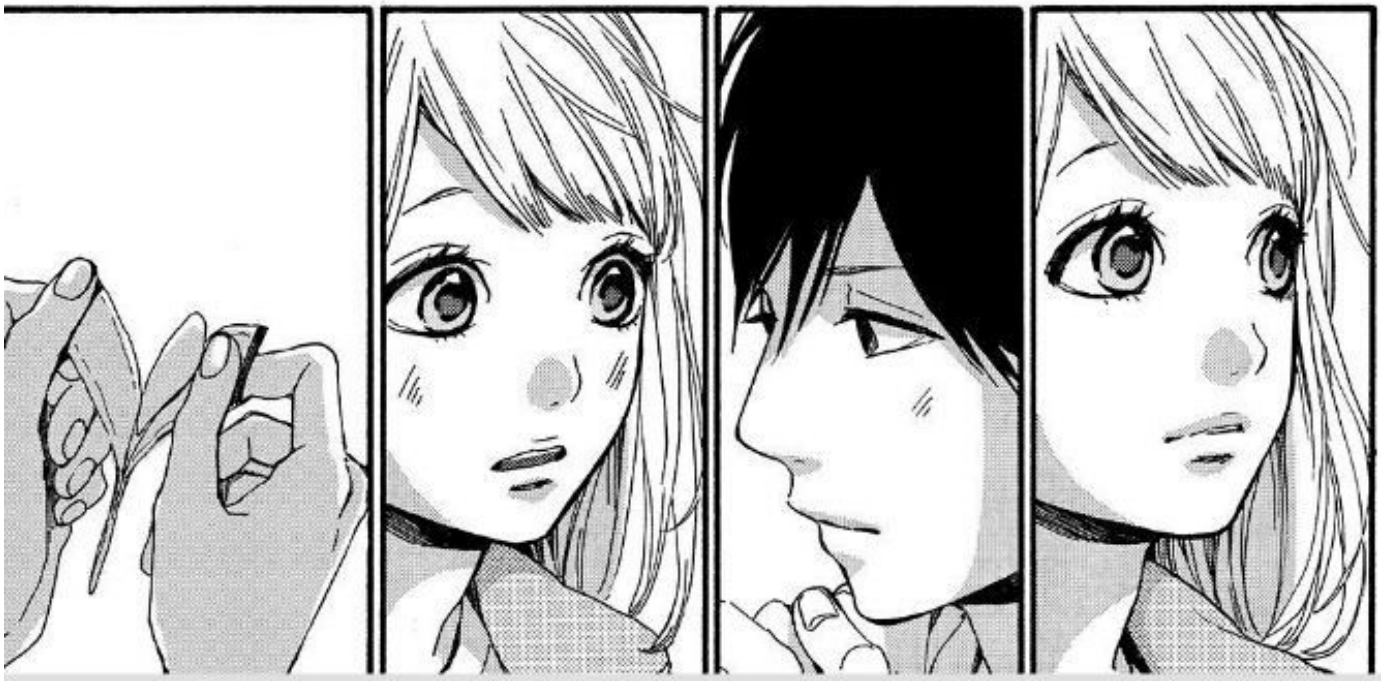
THAT WAS JUST...
NO, IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, NAHO.
...?


SO THEN... YOU WEREN'T... ANGRY?
I... I SEE.
NO, I WASN'T ANGRY.

BUT REALLY... I GUESS I WAS JUST JEALOUS.

I'M SORRY.

AH! HOW'S YOUR SCRAPE?
I HAVE BAND-AIDS.
WANT ONE?
BAND-AID
I SEE.
KAKERU WAS... JEALOUS...
That's silly...



DOES IT HURT?
NO...

I GOT MY REWARD.
THANKS.

...A LOT.

...IS CHANGING...

THE FUTURE...

CHAPTER 17

I'LL PRINT OUT MORE COPIES AND BRING 'EM TOMORROW.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT ANY OF THEM.

THANK YOUR DAD FOR US, SUWA!

I WANT THIS ONE AND THIS ONE...

I WANT THIS ONE.

...FROM THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL.

I BROUGHT THE PHOTOS...

AH... UM...

TH-THIS ONE...

WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT?

HOW ABOUT YOU, NAHO?

AH...

I WANT THAT ONE.

...I'M TAKING THIS ONE.
IN THAT CASE...

NAHO, YOU CAN ONLY SEE MY HEAD THERE.
CHOOSE A DIFFERENT ONE.
I WANT THIS ONE!

HEY, COME TO THINK OF IT...
...DID YOU EVER GET YOUR REWARD FROM NAHO FOR THE RELAY, KAKERU?
THEN GIVE THAT ONE BACK.
NO!!
B-BUT...

A KISS, REMEMBER?
A KISS.

R...
REWARD?!

THAT'S OKAY.
SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO.
IT WAS A KISS ON THE CHEEK...

Ah
I FORGOT ABOUT THAT. Sorry.
I HAVEN'T GOTTEN MY REWARD YET.

...AND I'M THE ONE WHO GOT IT.

WELL, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE FORGOTTEN! I PASSED ONE PERSON UP!
IT'S A SHAME YOU COULDN'T PASS TWO PEOPLE UP.
YOU TRIED SO HARD SO YOU COULD GO OUT WITH AZU...
I DIDN'T TRY HARD AT ALL!

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. THANK YOU, EVERYONE...
...FOR THE MESSAGE DURING THE RELAY.
SO INSTEAD, I'LL GIVE YOU A PHOTO OF AZU IN HER CHEERLEADER OUTFIT.
I DON'T NEED IT!
MY OWN PHOTO'S CUTER!
BUT WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY...
..."TEN YEARS FROM NOW"?
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THAT PART...
...EVENTUALLY.

WHEN DID YOU SEE THAT?
A PHOTO?
YOUR GRANDMA SHOWED IT TO ME.
THIS SHOT OF KAKERU...
HE'S GOT THE SAME EXPRESSION IN A PHOTO FROM WHEN HE WAS A LITTLE KID.

YOUR MOM WAS IN THE PHOTO, TOO.
AND A DOG, I THINK?
YEAH. WE HAD ONE WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
SO, ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR MOM NOW...
I THINK IT'S ENOUGH JUST TO SHOW HER THAT YOU CAN SMILE LIKE THIS, FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART.
THERE'S NO USE FEELING REGRETS OR APOLOGIZING.

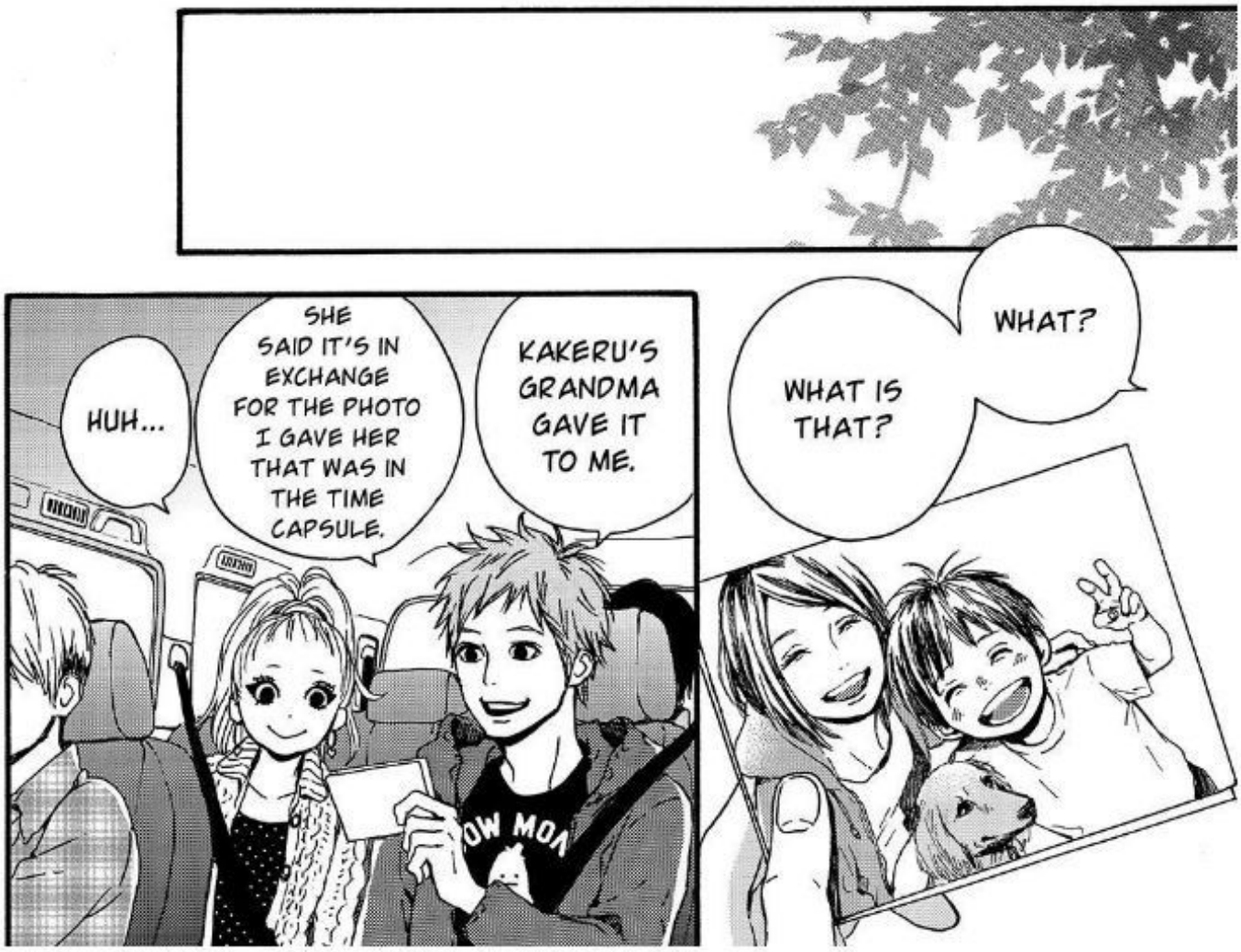
SO THERE'S NO REASON...
...FOR YOU TO SUFFER ANYMORE.
...SAVE KAKERU.
WE CAN...

THAT'S THE FEELING I GET.

THAT'S THE FEELING I GET.

...IS LEADING TO A BRIGHT FUTURE.

EVERY-THING WE'VE DONE UP TO NOW...



I WANT TO SAY I'M SORRY FOR STEALING HIS FUTURE.
I WANT TO APOLOGIZE TO KAKERU.
FOR STEALING NAHO.

YOU WERE LIKE THAT BACK THEN?
HUH?
OH, SHUT UP.
YOU STOLE NAHO?

...HOW NAHO FELT ABOUT HIM?
DID KAKERU KNOW...

I HOPE...
...HE DID KNOW, THOUGH.

I DON'T KNOW.

YEAH.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW NAHO FELT, EITHER...
...UNTIL AFTER KAKERU DIED.

I ONLY FOUND OUT HOW KAKERU FELT AFTER WORMING IT OUT OF HAGITA.
HUH? I TOLD YOU?
YOU WERE THE SOURCE OF ALL LEAKED SECRETS.

IF I'D ONLY REALIZED IT SOONER...
YEAH.
...I COULD'VE HELPED KAKERU.

SO...
...THERE WAS MORE THAN ONE PERSON IN LOVE WITH NAHO.
BUT SINCE I DIDN'T KNOW, I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHO TO CHEER ON.
I was?
IF I'D KNOWN KAKERU WAS GONNA DIE...
...I WOULD'VE BEEN IN HIS CORNER, NO QUESTION.
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW...
...HOW BOTH NAHO AND KAKERU FELT.
I'M THE WORST.
WHAT THE HELL? NONE OF YOU WOULD'VE BEEN ON MY SIDE?
...
しーん..
SILENCE
SERI-OUSLY?

SURE IT IS.
THAT'S NOT TRUE, SUWA!
SHE'S RIGHT.
IT ISN'T TRUE, PAPA.
I ONLY PRETENDED THAT I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW THEY FELT.
BUT IF KAKERU HAD LIVED...
...HE AND NAHO WOULD'VE GOTTEN MARRIED IN THE FUTURE.
WHAT?!
IN HIGH SCHOOL?! WHEN?!
WHEN DID YOU DO THAT?!
...I WAS OVERJOYED.
WHEN YOU CONFESSED YOUR FEELINGS TO ME WHEN WE WERE STILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS...
EVEN IF KAKERU HAD LIVED, I WOULD'VE MARRIED YOU, SUWA.

HAGITA, YOU IDIOT!

IT WAS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, WASN'T IT?

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE? IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO...

HUH?!

KAKERU AND NAHO, ARE YOU TWO GONNA SEE EACH OTHER?

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO FOR CHRISTMAS EVE?

YEAH...

YOU WANNA DO SOME-THING, YOU AND ME?

SPIT

THEN IT'S SETTLED!

YEAH!

AH...

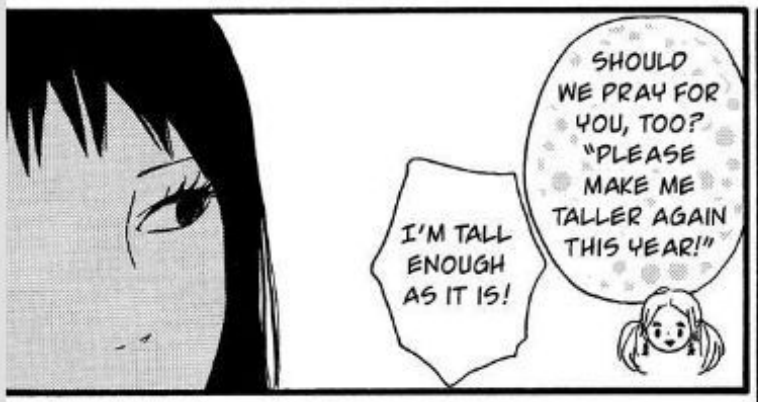
ARE YOU FREE?

HOW ABOUT THE TWO-YEAR SHRINE VISIT? YOU WANNA ALL GO TOGETHER AGAIN THIS YEAR?
WHAT'S A "TWO-YEAR SHRINE VISIT"?
WHAT?! YOU DON'T KNOW?
IT'S A REGIONAL DIALECT TERM.
IT IS?!
IT'S LIKE WE'RE DATING.
JUST THE TWO OF US ON CHRISTMAS EVE...

THEN LET'S ALL GO TO THE SHRINE TOGETHER.
THE TWO OF YOU OUGHTA GO TO THE SHRINE TOGETHER ON NEW YEAR'S.
IT'S WHEN YOU VISIT A SHRINE BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON NEW YEAR'S EVE AND STAY UNTIL IT BECOMES NEW YEAR'S DAY.
MMM... BUT...
...I WANNA GREET THE NEW YEAR WITH ALL YOU GUYS.
HUH.

COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THERE'S SOMETHING I GOTTA DO ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.
FUKASHI SHRINE?
YOHA-SHIRA SHRINE?
WHICH ONE?

WHA...?
I CAN'T GO.
NO, I'M SERIOUS.
WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
That sounds like a lie.


I'M TALL ENOUGH AS IT IS!
SHOULD WE PRAY FOR YOU, TOO? "PLEASE MAKE ME TALLER AGAIN THIS YEAR!"

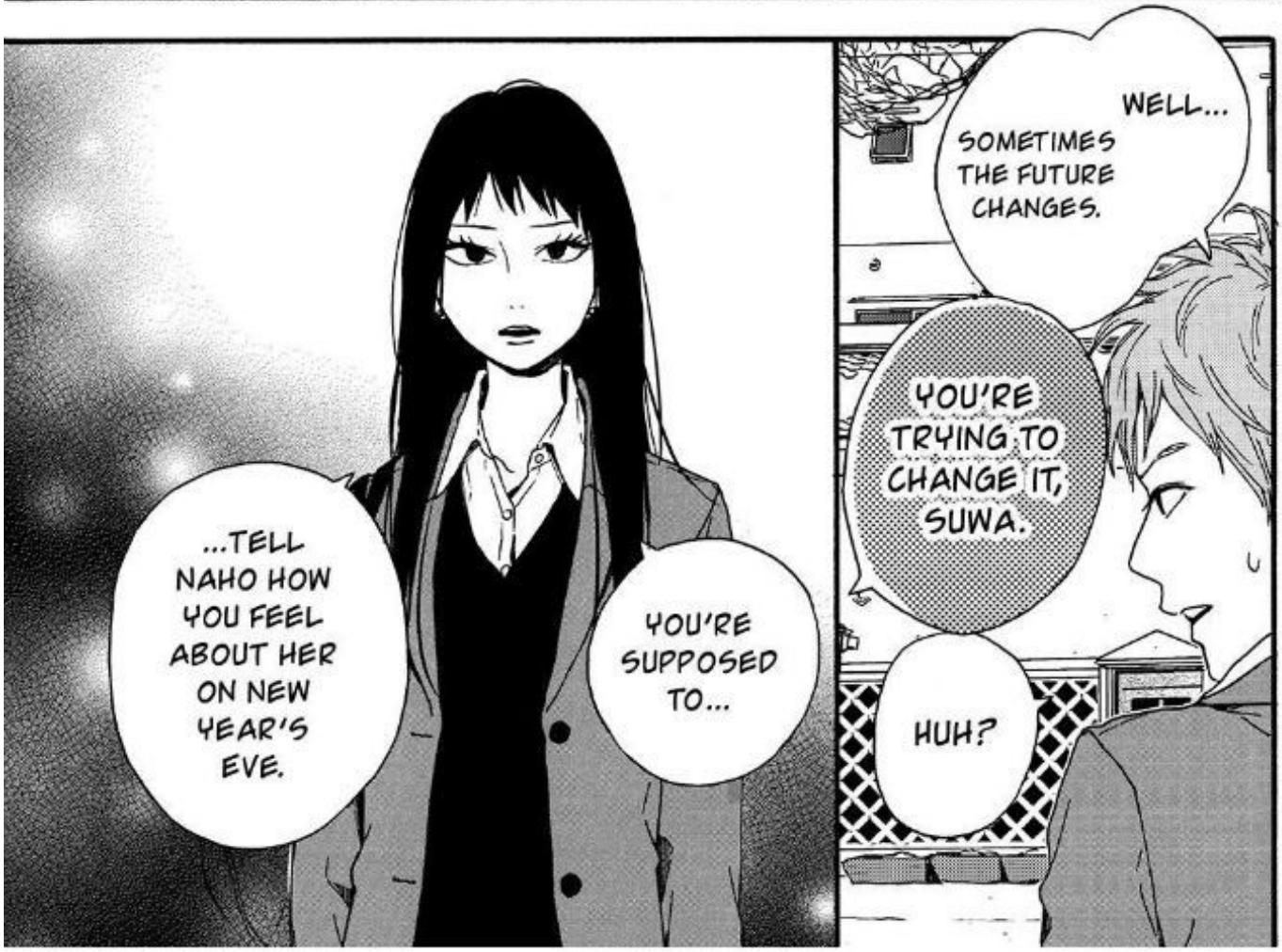
...ALL GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS?
WELL, SHOULD WE...
WELL, I'M GOING HOME.
I gotta go to cram school, anyway.

YOU GUYS GO FOR ME.
SORRY.

LET'S GO!
I'M BUYING!
BYE BYE!
HUH? JUST THE TWO OF US...?
NAHO!
HOW ABOUT GETTING A BEAN JAM PANCAKE?
?!
SURE...
Even though we just barely had sweets?

OW!
WHAT THE HELL?!
ガラ

MY LETTER SAYS...
...THAT YOU GO WITH US TO THE SHRINE ON NEW YEAR'S.
WHAT?
YOU're scary.
IT'S NOT A LIE...
YOU'RE LYING...
...ABOUT HAVING SOMETHING TO DO ON NEW YEAR'S.


WELL...
SOMETIMES THE FUTURE CHANGES.
YOU'RE TRYING TO CHANGE IT, SUWA.
HUH?
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO...
...TELL NAHO HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HER ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS IN YOUR LETTER, TAKA-CHAN?
YEAH.
AS I RECALL...
...IT SAID NAHO AND KAKERU HAVE A FIGHT ON NEW YEAR'S EVE OVER SOMETHING.

WHAT?!
NO WAY...

...A CRYING NAHO.

KAKERU GOES HOME...
...AND SUWA COMFORTS...

I'VE ALWAYS LO...
I THINK...
...KAKERU HATES ME...
...IT'S OKAY.
HE DOESN'T HATE YOU... AND EVEN IF HE DID...
I'M NOT GONNA DO THAT.
EVER.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO ERASE THAT?
BUT IT HAS TO DO WITH YOUR FUTURE WITH NAHO.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HELPING KAKERU.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO TELL HER THAT, RIGHT?

MARRIED?
THE FUTURE WHERE YOU AND NAHO GET MARRIED?
SUWA AND NAHO...?

APPARENTLY, THAT CONFESSION OF HIS FEELINGS WAS THE TRIGGER.
THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS IN MY LETTER.
EVEN IF NAHO IS IN LOVE WITH KAKERU NOW...
...SEVERAL YEARS FROM NOW, SHE'LL BE IN LOVE WITH...
THAT'S...
...GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS WORLD!

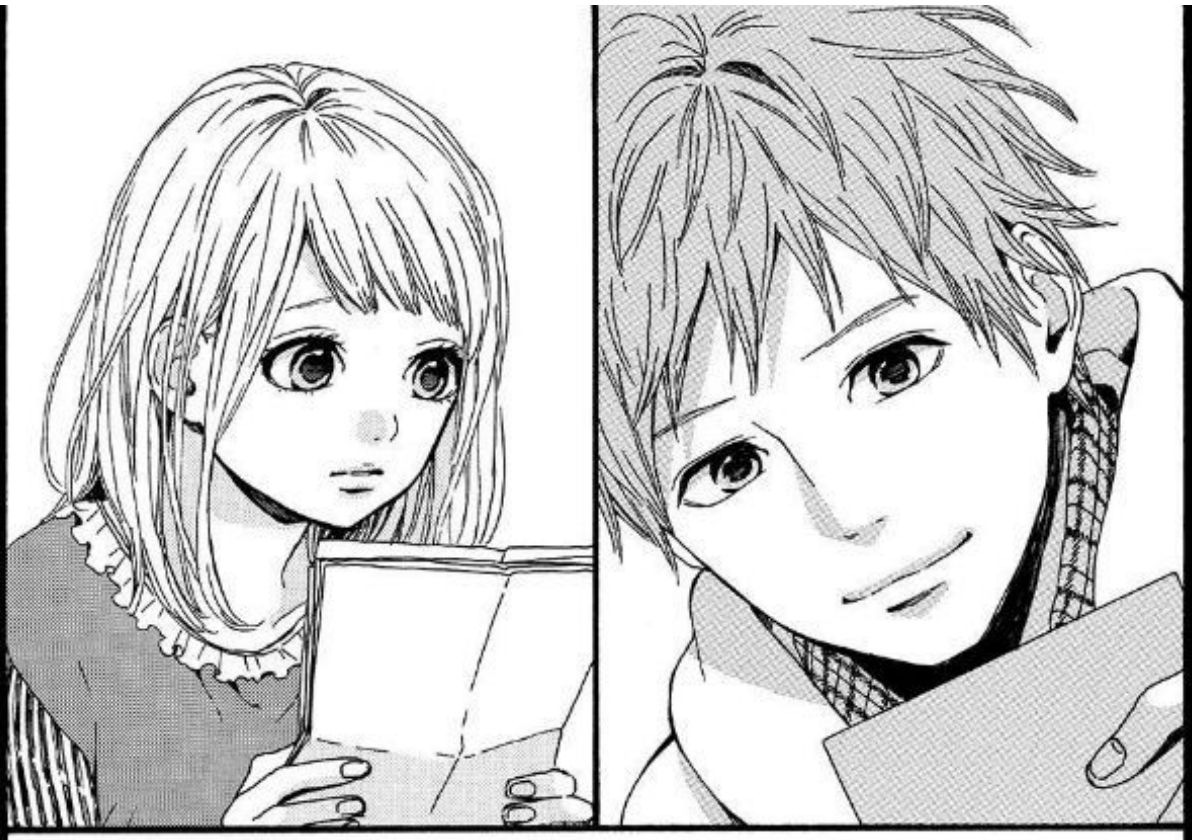
REMEMBER WHAT NAKANO-SENSEI...
...TOLD US ABOUT PARALLEL WORLDS.
THE WORLD WHERE OUR TEN-YEARS-OLDER SELVES SENT US LETTERS...
...AND THE WORLD WHERE WE RECEIVED THEM EXIST SEPARATELY.
EVEN IF I CHANGE THE FUTURE, NOTHING WILL CHANGE IN THE WORLD WHERE THEY SENT THE LETTERS.
WHEN NAHO AND I GOT MARRIED...
...WE CHOSE THAT PATH BECAUSE KAKERU WAS DEAD.
BUT IN THIS WORLD, I'M NOT GONNA CHOOSE THAT PATH.
THERE'S NO WAY I'M GONNA TELL NAHO HOW I REALLY FEEL ABOUT HER.
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.

THE DAY KAKERU DIES...
THEY GAVE US A CHANCE TO CHANGE THE FUTURE.
THEY TOLD US THE DAY.

...IS OUR
PRESENT.

THE HAPPINESS
OUR FUTURE
SELVES WRITE
ABOUT...

THEY TAUGHT US
THAT EVEN OUR
DAILY LIVES, WHICH
WE TAKE FOR
GRANTED, ARE
PRECIOUS.



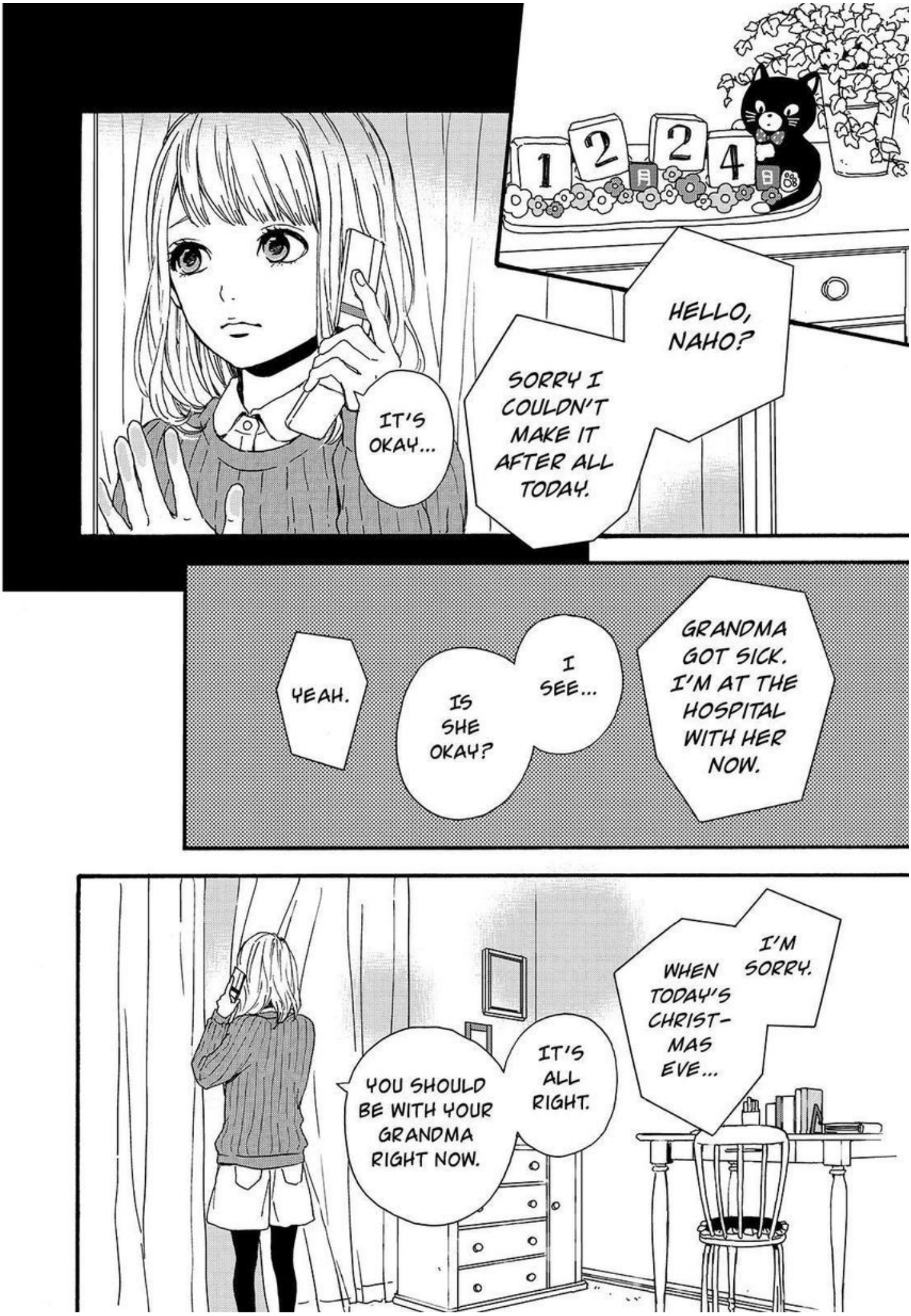
DECEMBER 31ST

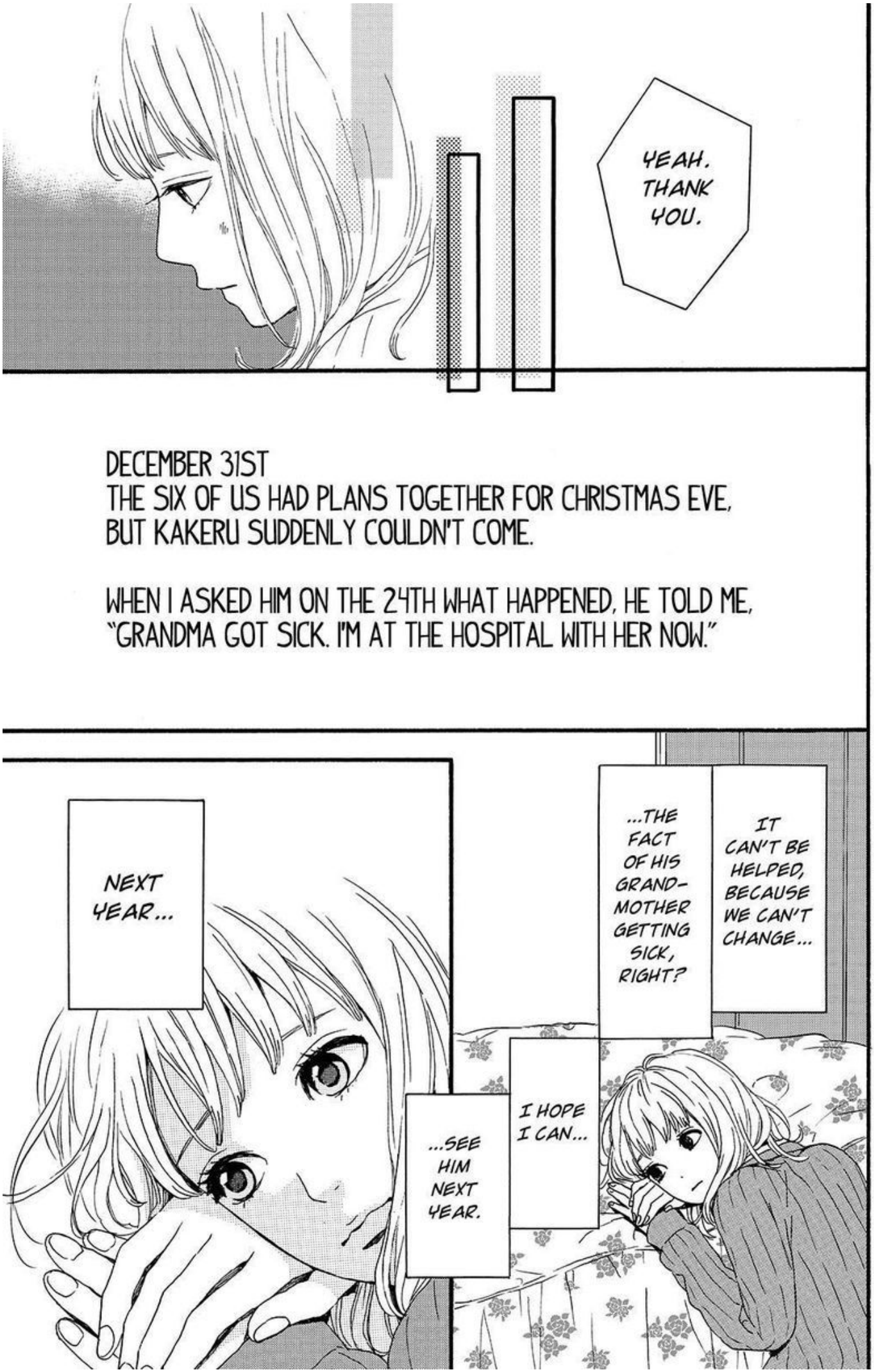
WE ALL GO TO THE SHRINE TOGETHER AS PLANNED.
KAKERU AND I HAVE A FIGHT.
FROM THIS DAY ON, THERE'S SOME KIND OF DISTANCE BETWEEN KAKERU AND ME.
WE DON'T TALK AS MUCH ANYMORE.

I NEVER GOT TO APOLOGIZE TO KAKERU BEFORE HE DIED.

CHAPTER 18

AUTHOR: TAKANO ICHIGO


12月24日
HELLO, NAHO?
SORRY I COULDN'T MAKE IT AFTER ALL TODAY.
IT'S OKAY...
GRANDMA GOT SICK. I'M AT THE HOSPITAL WITH HER NOW.
I SEE...
IS SHE OKAY?
YEAH.
I'M SORRY.
WHEN TODAY'S CHRIST-MAS EVE...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU SHOULD BE WITH YOUR GRANDMA RIGHT NOW.

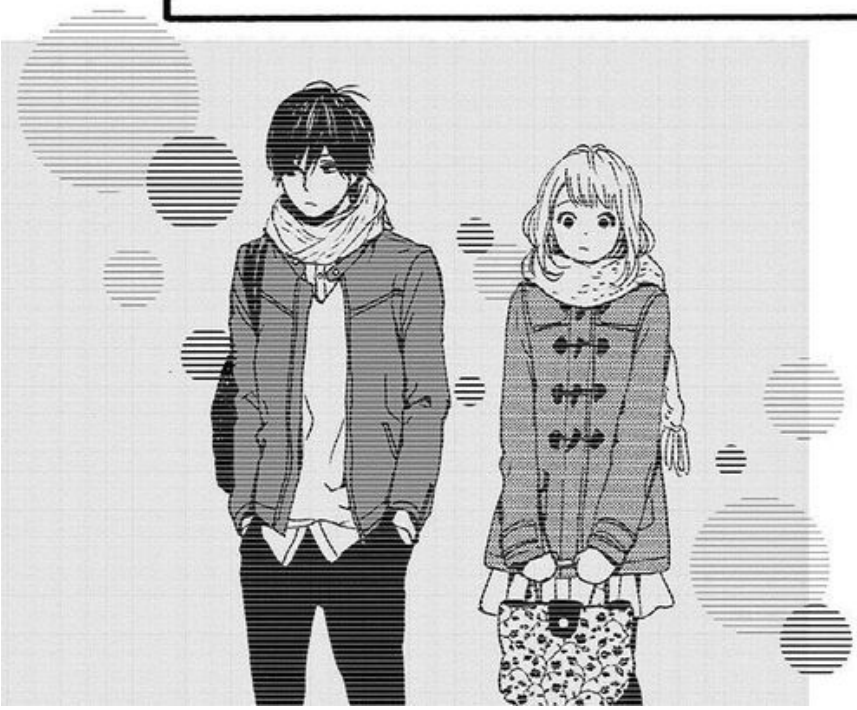

YEAH. THANK YOU.
DECEMBER 31ST
THE SIX OF US HAD PLANS TOGETHER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE, BUT KAKERU SUDDENLY COULDN'T COME.
WHEN I ASKED HIM ON THE 24TH WHAT HAPPENED, HE TOLD ME, "GRANDMA GOT SICK. I'M AT THE HOSPITAL WITH HER NOW."
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, BECAUSE WE CAN'T CHANGE...
...THE FACT OF HIS GRAND-MOTHER GETTING SICK, RIGHT?
I HOPE I CAN...
...SEE HIM NEXT YEAR.
NEXT YEAR...

LET'S...
...SEE A LOT MORE OF EACH OTHER NEXT YEAR...
...KAKERU.
NAHO!
TAKA-CHAN!
HI! IS YOUR DATE OVER?
WE JUST RAN INTO EACH OVER THERE!
KAKERU SAID HE'S GOING TO BE LATE.
HOW ABOUT SUWA?
HE'S NOT HERE YET.
HE SAID HE COULDN'T MAKE IT, REMEM-BER?

WE GATHERED AT FUKASHI SHRINE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE. KAKERU WAS LATE, BUT HE CAME.

WE PLAYED ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS. KAKERU AND I LOST, SO THE TWO OF US HAD TO GO BUY DRINKS FOR EVERYONE.

KAKERU SEEMED DIFFERENT THAT NIGHT. HE DIDN'T TALK MUCH.



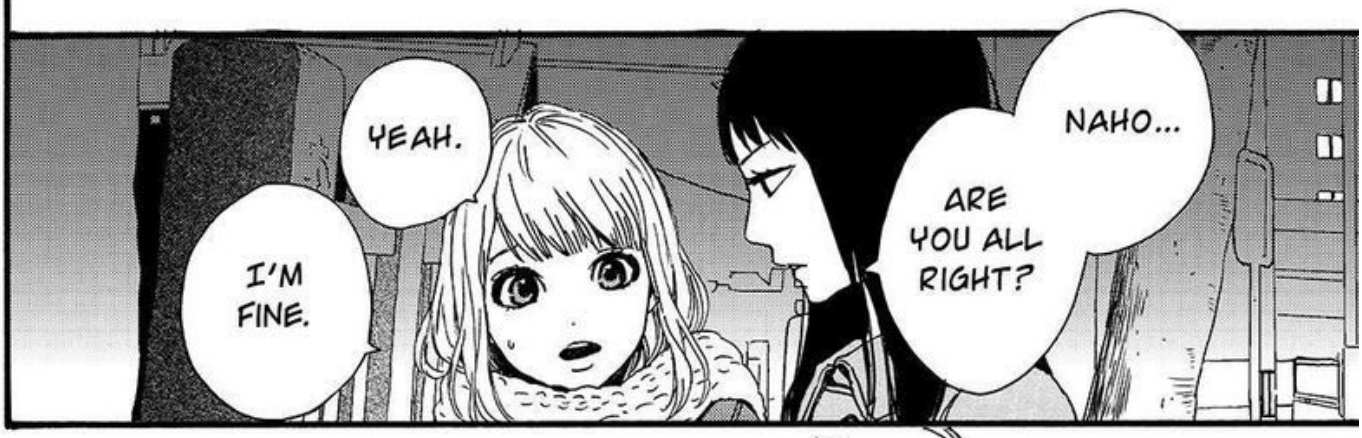
WHEN THE TWO OF US WERE ALONE, WE TALKED ABOUT HIS GRANDMOTHER.

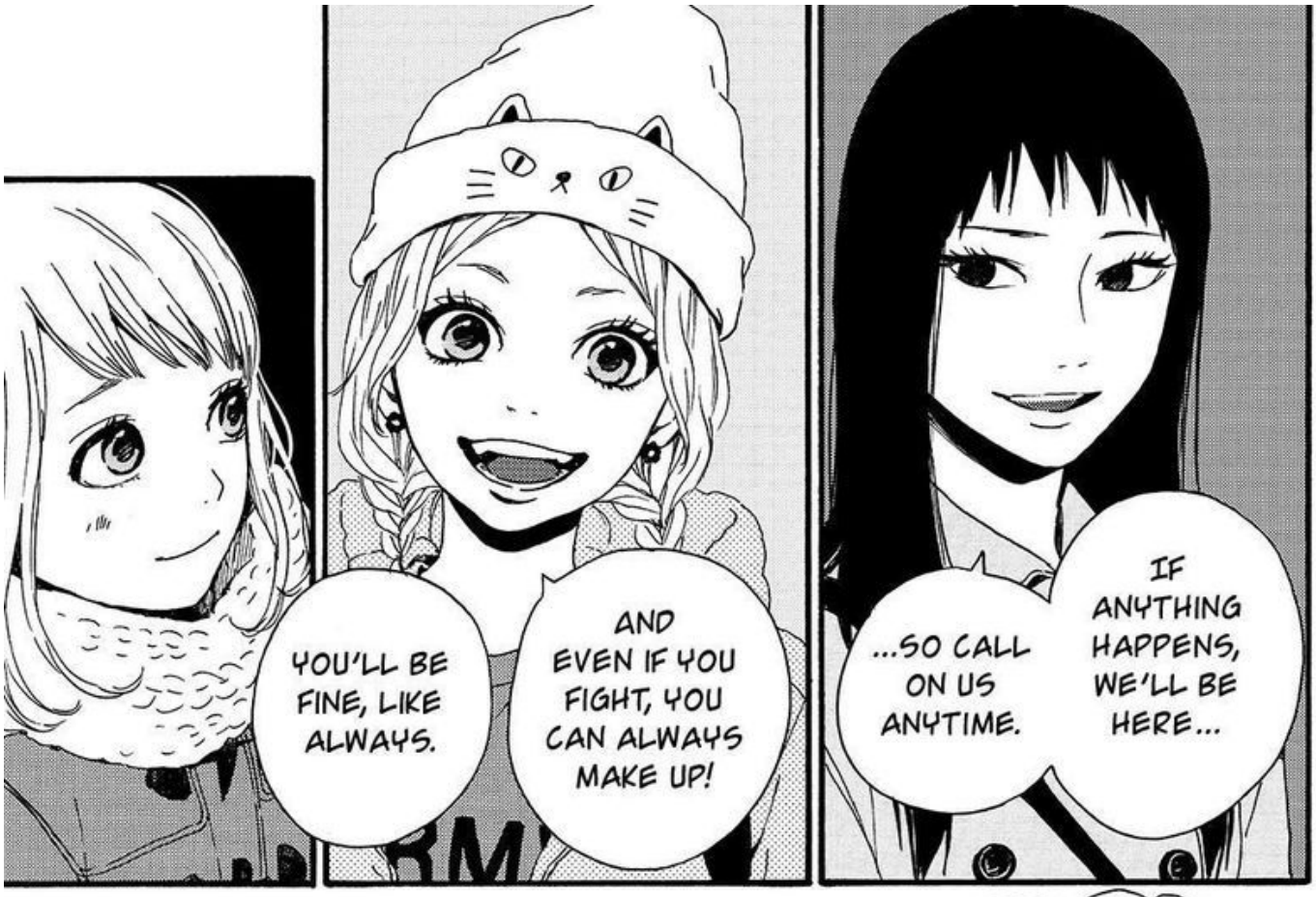
HE MUTTERED, "IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO GRANDMA, I'D BE ALONE."

AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE MEANT.
I SAID, "YOU WON'T BE ALONE."
I TOLD HIM, "RIGHT NOW, LET'S FORGET ABOUT OUR TROUBLES AND HAVE A GOOD TIME."

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, KAKERU LOOKED ANGRY AT ME.

"WHAT DO YOU KNOW, NAHO?" HE ASKED.





I MADE KAKERU ANGRY THAT DAY.

HE TOLD ME, "I DON'T WANT TO TALK ANYMORE" AND "STAY AWAY FROM ME."

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I HAD DONE WRONG.

WHEN I THINK OF IT NOW, I REALIZE WHAT A TERRIBLE THING I SAID. "FORGET ABOUT OUR TROUBLES." SHEESH.

I WANT YOU TO LEARN MORE ABOUT KAKERU AND WATCH WHAT YOU SAY SO YOU DON'T HURT HIM.

EVEN IF IT DOESN'T GO WELL, BE SURE TO APOLOGIZE THIS TIME.

SORRY I'M LATE.

KAKERU!

YOU'RE WEARING A SCARF, HUH, NAHO?

IT'S CUTE.

I'M WEARING A SCARF, TOO.

IT'S CUTE.

HE'S WEARING A SCARF.

Y...
YOU LOOK CUTE TOO, KAKERU!

WHERE'S SUWA?
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE SAID HE LOOKED "HANDSOME" INSTEAD?
Hm?
?

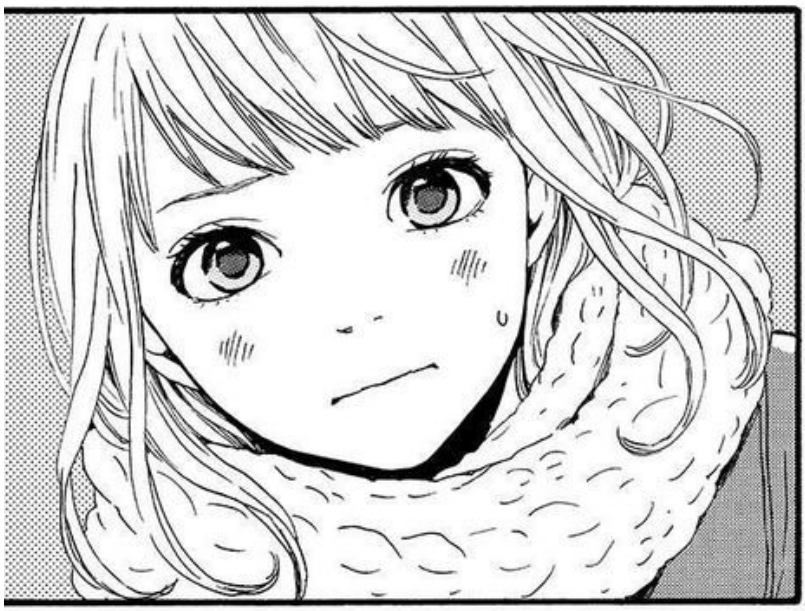
HA HA HA
THANKS.

YAY!
MINE SAYS "BEST LUCK"!
MINE'S "GOOD LUCK."
I GOT "SLIGHTLY GOOD LUCK"...
FORTUNES 100 YEN

He said he had five bowls of rice, seven rice cakes, as well as soba noodles...
HE JUST ATE TOO MUCH.
HE SAID HE HAS A STOMACH-ACHE.
AT HOME IN BED.
HE'S GONNA GET MAD AT YOU LATER.
HAGITA.

REALLY? ALL RIGHT!
THE SAME AS ME!
I GOT "SLIGHTLY GOOD LUCK," TOO...
"SLIGHTLY GOOD LUCK."
WHAT FORTUNE DID YOU GET?
we wanna know!
HM?
HOW ABOUT YOU, KAKERU?
MINE SAYS...

ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS!
I COULD GO FOR CAFE AU LAIT...
I'LL TAKE MILK TEA.
THEY'RE SELLING SWEET SAKE OVER THERE.
HAGITA, BUY US SOMETHING WARM TO DRINK.
IT'S TRUE.
HE'S DIFFERENT TONIGHT.
Fukashi Shrine
HAPPY NEW YEAR



HAGITA, DO YOU HAVE A PHONE?
Ah! LET'S TRY CALLING SUWA.
CALL HIM ON YOUR OWN!
IT'LL BE OKAY.

THEY'VE BEEN CHANGING LITTLE BY LITTLE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
NAHO...
...AND KAKERU.

THE WAY NAHO IS NOW, THEY WILL.
I HOPE THEY'LL BE OKAY.
RMY

WANT TO CHECK OUT ANOTHER VENDING MACHINE?
HA HA HA
MAYBE HE'D BE SATISFIED WITH SWEET RED-BEAN SOUP.

AFTER ALL...
...I KNOW MORE ABOUT KAKERU THIS TIME AROUND.
IT'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS I DON'T SAY WHAT WAS IN THE LETTER.
HUH? THEY DON'T HAVE...
...THE MILKSHAKE HAGITA WANTED.
who drinks a milkshake when it's this cold?

NAHO, SORRY ABOUT LAST TIME.

I'D BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
EVERY DAY...

SUDDENLY BAILING ON YOU ON CHRISTMAS EVE...
OH. THAT'S OKAY.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

NEXT YEAR...
NEXT YEAR, LET'S BE TOGETHER!
HA HA!
AS LONG AS MY GRANDMA DOESN'T GET SICK AGAIN.
LET'S...
...MAKE A PROMISE TO EACH OTHER, KAKERU.
IS YOUR GRAND-MOTHER OKAY NOW?
YEAH.
SHE WAS DOING BETTER TODAY.
AT FIRST, SHE JUST HAD A REGULAR COLD...
...BUT IT TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE ON CHRISTMAS EVE AND ALMOST TURNED INTO PNEUMONIA.

OH... SO THAT'S IT...
I WONDER IF KAKERU WAS WORRIED.
IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO GRANDMA...
...I'D BE ALONE.
BA-DUMP

I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD BE FINE...
...WITH MY MOTHER, TOO.

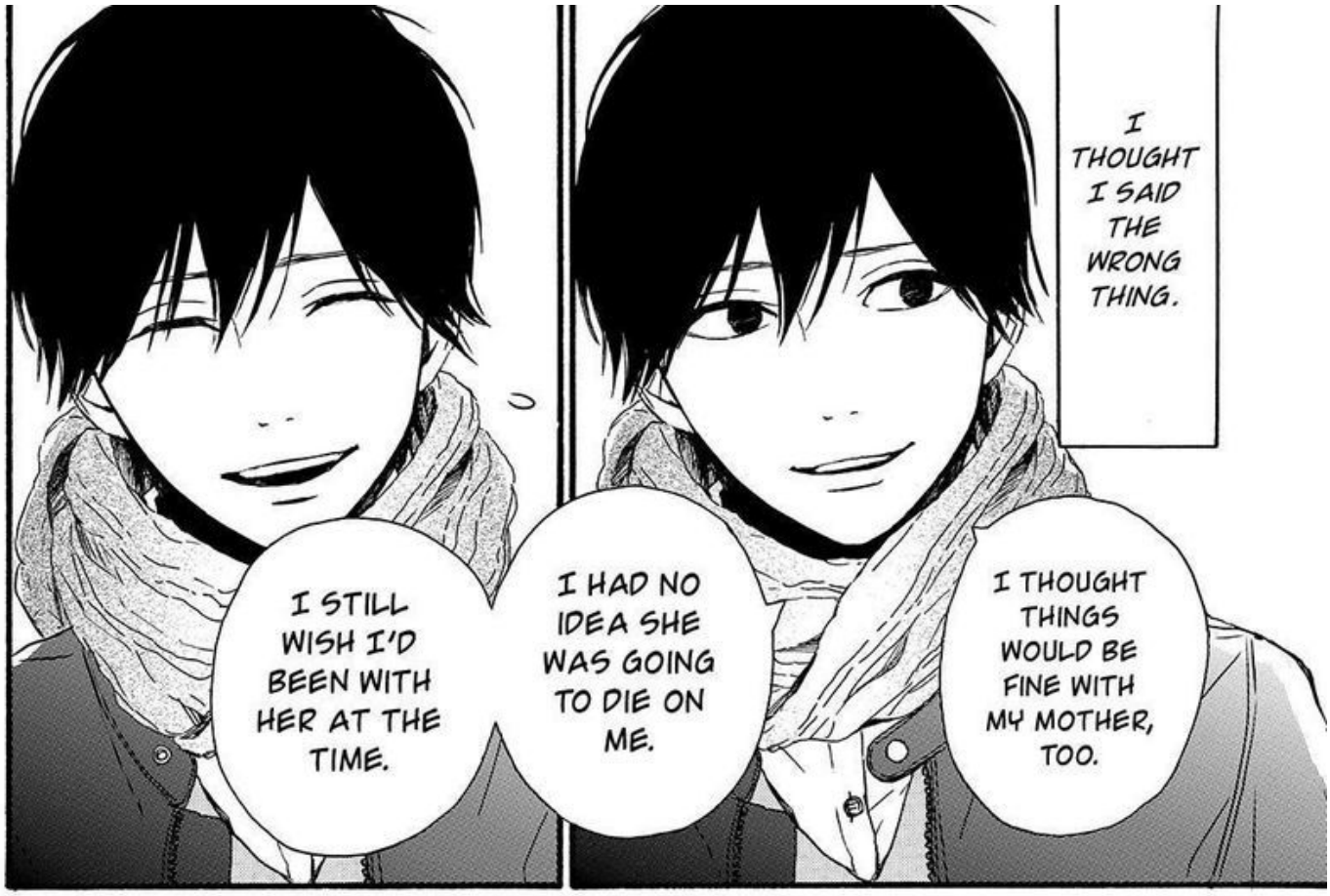
D...
DON'T WORRY...
AFTER ALL, THE LETTER SAYS...

...WE MEET HIS GRAND-MOTHER LONG AFTER HE DIES.
SHE'LL STILL BE AROUND TEN YEARS FROM NOW.
YOUR GRAND-MOTHER WILL BE FINE.

WRONG ANSWER!
SORRY.
AH...

SORRY!
I'M GETTING ALL GLOOMY ON YOU.

I WAS SCARED...
...FOR A SECOND THERE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
PHEW
ほっ


I THOUGHT I SAID THE WRONG THING.
I STILL WISH I'D BEEN WITH HER AT THE TIME.
I HAD NO IDEA SHE WAS GOING TO DIE ON ME.
I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD BE FINE WITH MY MOTHER, TOO.

THAT FAKE SMILE...
...JUST MAKES ME EVEN MORE ANXIOUS.
THIS IS KAKERU'S...
...BAD HABIT.
WOULD YOU MIND IF I WENT HOME EARLY TONIGHT?
NAHO.

I'M SCARED.

...CAN YOU STAY A LITTLE LONGER?

IF POSSIBLE...

...

...AND WANT TO BE WITH HER.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT GRANDMA...

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?

...TO LEAVE KAKERU ALONE.

RIGHT NOW I'M SCARED...

I PROMISE YOU, SHE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

YOUR GRANDMOTHER WILL BE ALL RIGHT.

HOW?
I CAN'T TELL YOU...
BUT...
...YOU JUST GOT HERE... YOU CAN STAY A LITTLE LONGER...
IF HE'S WITH ALL OF US, I'M SURE KAKERU WON'T WORRY.
IT WAS THE SAME ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.
...
HOW CAN YOU SAY EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA!

AH!
NO...
"ALL RIGHT."
AS IF PEOPLE CAN DECIDE WHETHER SOMETHING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!
WAIT.
ONE MORE TIME...
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH SHE WAS SUFFERING.
SO MUCH THAT DEATH WAS PREFERABLE, WHILE I THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS "ALL RIGHT."
AND I LEFT MY MOTHER ALONE!
I WANT TO DO IT OVER AGAIN!

I...
...KILLED HER!

I HAVE TO...
SOME-THING...
...SAY SOME-THING.
...THAT WILL PUT KAKERU'S MIND AT EASE.
I HAVE TO APOLO-GIZE.
SORRY... I'M GOING HOME.
WAIT.
FWAP
DON'T.

I DON'T WANT TO...
...TALK ANYMORE.
STAY AWAY...
...FROM ME.

I'M SORRY...
...WASN'T I ABLE TO CHANGE IT?
WHY...
IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
HELLO, SUWA?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING RIGHT NOW?
WATCHING THE SONG CONTEST.
DOING WHAT?
I'M BUSY!
I TOLD YOU YOU'D BETTER COME!

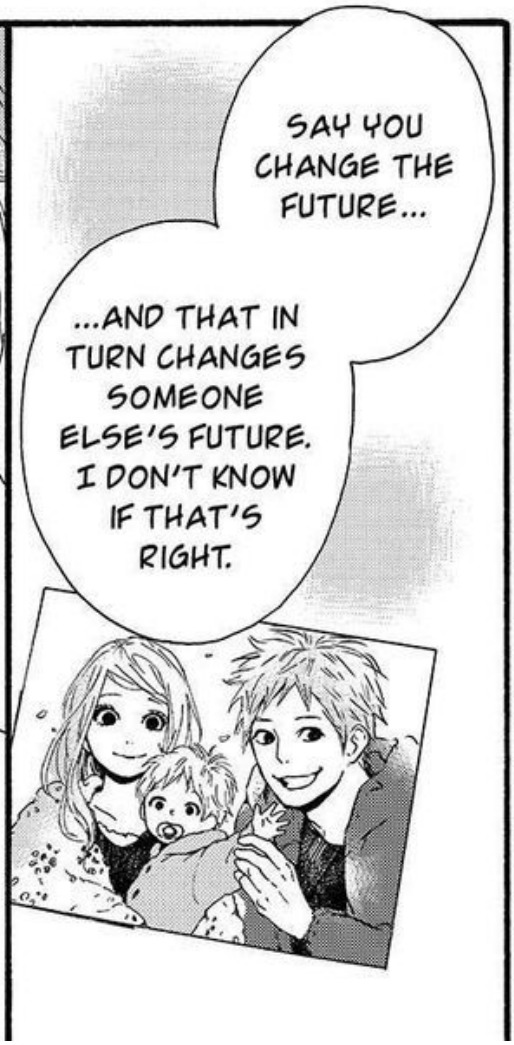
DO YOU THINK...
...THAT IF YOU TOLD NAHO HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HER, KAKERU COULDN'T BE SAVED?
...
IF THAT'S THE CASE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY.
I PROMISE YOU WE'LL HELP KAKERU, SO BE HONEST WITH HER ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.

SNAPPING
HEY!
JACK-ASS!
SINCE YOU WERE A NO-SHOW, I HAD A HELL OF A TIME FINDING THE MEETUP SPOT.
WHAT AM I, A LAND-MARK?
SUWA...
IT'S KIND OF LATE IN THE DAY TO SAY THIS NOW...
...BUT I DON'T THINK CHANGING THE FUTURE IS NECES-SARILY THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

TAKE THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL, FOR EXAMPLE.
BY CHANGING THE FUTURE...
...IT HAS AN EFFECT NOT ONLY ON KAKERU, BUT ON OTHER PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

THE BLUE TEAM WAS SUPPOSED TO WIN, BUT BECAUSE OF US, THE RED TEAM WON.
...SO THE GUY WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE FIRST CAME IN SECOND PLACE.
KAKERU WON FIRST PLACE IN THE RELAY...

HEY.
YOU LISTENING TO ME?
LET ME TALK TO HIM.
Ignoring me?


SAY YOU CHANGE THE FUTURE...
...AND THAT IN TURN CHANGES SOMEONE ELSE'S FUTURE. I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S RIGHT.

BECAUSE I KNOW YOU COULD PROTECT NAHO!
...
I TOLD YOU I WAS ROOTING FOR NAHO AND KAKERU...
SUWA!
...BUT IT'S NOT JUST THEM. I WANT TO CHEER YOU ON, TOO.
I THOUGHT I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE ON MY SIDE.
WHAT THE HECK, YOU GUYS?
WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?
I'M HANGING UP.
WHAT?
SUWA?
THE NEW YEAR WILL BE UPON US...
THE NEW YEAR WILL BE UPON US IN TEN MIN-UTES.
HUH?
RM

I STILL DON'T REALLY KNOW KAKERU.
...OR WHICH WORDS WILL MAKE HIM HAPPY.
I DON'T KNOW WHICH WORDS WILL HURT HIM...
BEEP
SUWA...
NAHO...
...I HURT KAKERU WITHOUT REALIZING IT.
NO MATTER WHICH WORDS I CHOSE...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN HIS HEART.

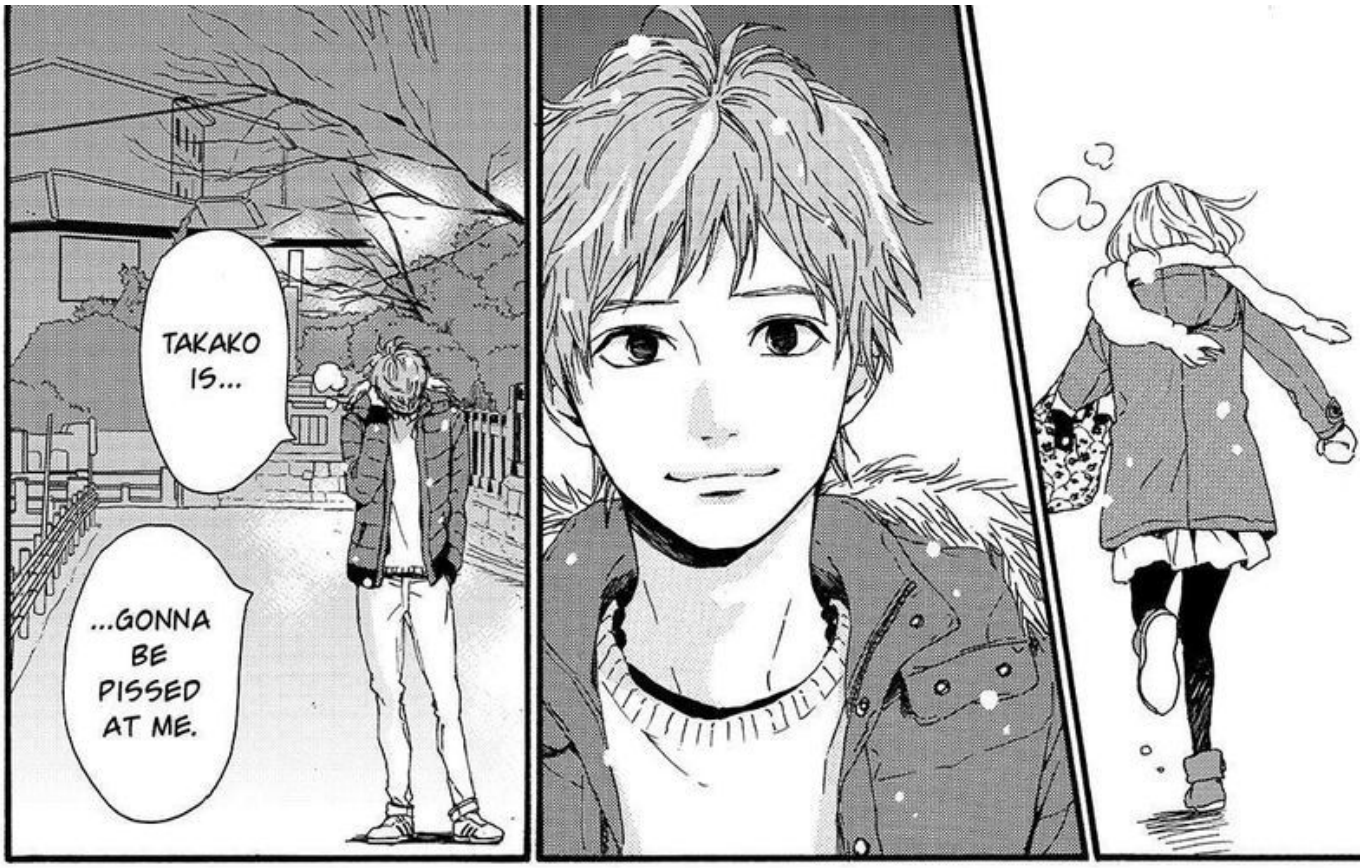
ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M SORRY... SUWA...
I COULDN'T MANAGE TO...
YEAH.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'M SORRY...

KAKERU...
...MAY HATE ME NOW.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
...IT'LL WORK OUT.
AND EVEN IF HE DOES...
HE DOESN'T HATE YOU.

I'LL WATCH OVER YOU TWO...
...TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T DRIFT APART.
IF YOU GUYS HAVE PROBLEMS...
...I'LL GRAB KAKERU BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK...
...AND HAUL HIM BEFORE YOU LIKE I DID BEFORE.
TRY TO MAKE EVEN MORE PROGRESS WITH HIM.
SO NAHO...
...DON'T BE SCARED.

TREASURE THE TIME...
...YOU SPEND WITH KAKERU.
YEAH...
THANK YOU.
NOW GET HIM BACK HERE.
IF YOU DON'T HURRY, IT'LL BE NEW YEARS!
RIGHT!
STEP



"I DON'T WANT TO TALK ANYMORE."

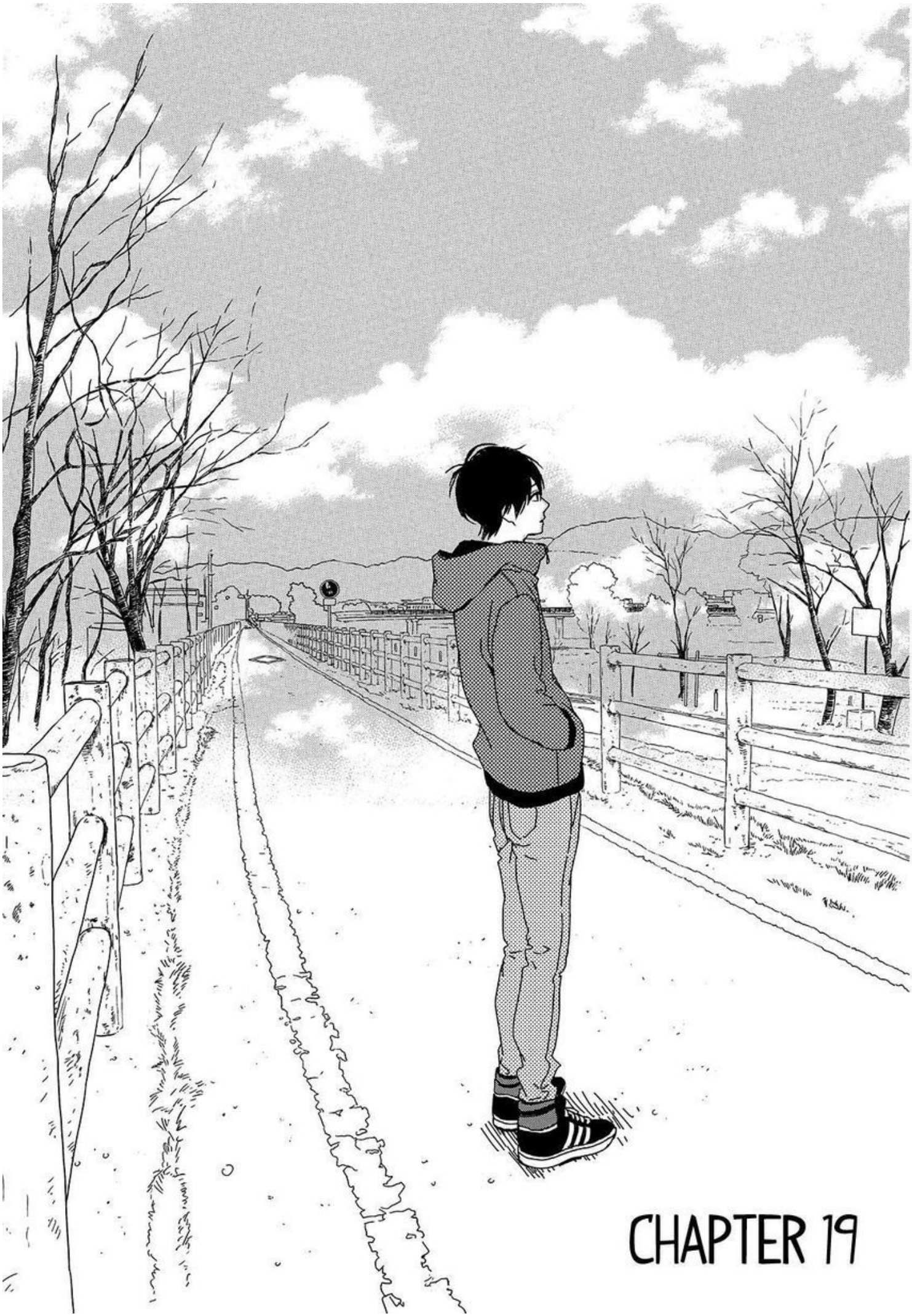
FROM THIS DAY ON, THERE'S DISTANCE BETWEEN KAKERU AND ME.
WE DON'T TALK AS MUCH ANYMORE, EITHER.

I NEVER GOT TO APOLOGIZE TO KAKERU BEFORE HE DIED.

...IS IT MY FAULT...
カッ
CRACK
...THAT KAKERU DIED?
PRRRR
PRRRR

KAKERU...
PICK UP...
5...
4...
3...
2...
1...
IHM

IF...
...PARTS OF THE FUTURE CAN BE CHANGED...
...AND PARTS OF THE FUTURE CANNOT...
...WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE KAKERU?



CHAPTER 19

IT WAS SUDDEN.

AT THE END OF MY FIRST YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL, MOM SAID WE WERE MOVING TO MATSUMOTO.

MOM ALWAYS MADE DECISIONS WITHOUT EVEN ASKING ME FOR MY INPUT.

HEY, MOM.

WHERE'D YOU PUT...

...MY SOCCER BAG AND SPIKES?

RATTLE

RATTLE

HUH?

I THREW THAT STUFF AWAY.

WHAT?

AFTER ALL, YOU PROMISED NOT TO JOIN A CLUB AT YOUR NEW SCHOOL, RIGHT?
THEY WERE ALL BEATEN-UP ANYWAY.
SO YOU DON'T NEED THOSE THINGS.

THERE WAS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT TO ME!!
GIMME A DAMN BREAK!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO TOSS 'EM!

SHE NEVER CHANGES.

バタン
SLAM

KAKERU-KUN!

LET'S WALK HOME TOGETHER!

...MOM GOT DIVORCED WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING TO ME.

EVEN WHEN I WAS LITTLE...

COOL. Though she can get a scary look in her eyes.

CHINO-SAN.

CHEERFUL. Talks a lot.

AZU?

HE'S A REALLY NICE GUY. Even if he is tall and loud...

SUWA-KUN.

...

TAKA-MIYA-SAN.

... Glasses.

HAGITA-KUN.

BZZ
BZZ
Mom
Where are you? I have to go to the hospital. Don't screw around, just come home right now.
I'M CURIOUS ABOUT HER.
TRADE ME FOR YOUR CURRY BUN!
I'LL APOLOGIZE TO HER LATER.
I'M GONNA FORGET ABOUT MOM FOR THE MOMENT AND JUST HAVE FUN.
SURE.
KAKERU-KUN, LET'S GO!
LET'S DITCH HAGITA.
HEY!
WHAT A PAIN.
SHE CAN GO BY HER-SELF, CAN'T SHE?
I can't go with you right now. You're not a child and can get there on your own, right? Don't ruin my life.

THAT WAS THE LAST CONVERSATION I HAD WITH MOM.
SHE DIDN'T TEXT ME BACK.
MORNING!
MORN-ING!
DID YOU BRING YOUR SWEAT-SHIRT?
MORN-ING!
EVERYONE'S ACTING NORMAL.
WELL, OF COURSE...
THEY DON'T KNOW.

KAKERU!
GOOD MORNING!
...THE WORLD WOULDN'T CHANGE.
...AND EVEN IF THEY DID...
NOBODY KNOWS MY MOM IS DEAD...
LUCKY HIM.
SUWA IS IN THE SOCCER CLUB?
HUH.
I DON'T WANT TO, ESPE-CIALLY.
NAH.
...
...AT THE BALL GAME TOURNA-MENT.
I WANTED TO PLAY SOCCER, TOO...

SORRY!
CLASS 3 WON THE GIRLS' SOFTBALL FINAL!
GAME SET!
I'M DONE WITH ALL THAT.
I REALLY AM SORRY.
THANK YOU, AZU!
YOU DID YOUR BEST!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, AZU!
I MESSED UP!
IT'S MY FAULT... I'M SORRY...
FORGET ABOUT IT.
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS PLACE.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, NARUSE?
THIS IS YOUR FAULT!
WE DON'T NEED YOU ON THE TEAM!

CHIK
MY WORK IS DONE HERE.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SEEM DOWN.
...I'M WORRIED ABOUT AZU.
SHE'S DEPRESSED AFTER WHAT HAPPENED.
AZU ONLY TOOK ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BATTING...
...BECAUSE I BOWED OUT.
I SHOULD'VE DONE IT, EVEN IF WE LOST.
I'M THE ONE WHO STOPPED YOU.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, TAKAMIYA-SAN.
OKAY?
IT'S MY FAULT YOU DIDN'T BAT.
IF IT BOTHERS YOU, THEN IT BOTHERS ME.

...REMINDS ME OF ME.
SHE KIND OF...
TAKE CARE.
I'M SORRY.
...OKAY.
I CAN'T JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB, AFTER ALL.
SORRY, SUWA.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY SHE'S ALWAYS ON MY MIND.
BUT IF YOU EVER DO WANT TO JOIN, THE DOOR'S ALWAYS OPEN. I'LL BE WAITING.
OKAY.
THANKS.
OKAY, I'LL TELL THE SENIORS.
I SEE...

I HAD A BLAST PLAYING SOCCER WITH SUWA.
...I DON'T WANNA QUIT.
WHEN YOU LOOK LIKE THAT...
THE SENIORS WERE ALL REALLY NICE, TOO.
BUT...
...I MADE A PROMISE TO MOM.
I'M SORRY I BROKE ONE PROM-ISE...
...ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CERE-MONY.
I REGRET THAT.

KAKERU!
HERE!
SWISH
THAT'S COLD!
WHAT?!
HA HA HA
IT'S ICE!
From shaved ice!
YOU WERE JUST STANDING THERE THE LONGEST TIME, SO WE FIGURED YOU MUST BE GETTING HOT.
HEY, YOU GUYS, QUIT SCREWING AROUND AND GET TO WORK.
WAIT!
WHAT KIND OF OUTFIT IS THAT, HAGITA-KUN?
HUH?
I FELL IN THE POOL AND GOT MY CLOTHES WET.
SO I BORROWED HERS.
YOU BORROWED THOSE CLOTHES?

I HAVE FUN...
...WHEN I'M WITH EVERY-ONE.
THERE ARE ALWAYS A LOT OF LAUGHS...
...WHEN WE'RE TOGETH-ER.
I DON'T WANT THEM TO KNOW...
...ABOUT MY TROUBLES, MY PAIN.
IF I TOLD THEM ABOUT IT, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO BE WITH THEM ANYMORE.

"MATSUMOTO BON-BON"?
I DON'T WANT THEM TO HATE ME...
...SO I'LL KEEP ALL THAT BOTTLED UP INSIDE FOREVER.
NO, NO, NO!
THAT'D BE RUDE TO SUWA.
BZZZZ
BZZZZ
...
I JUST WANNA GO WITH HER...
A FESTIVAL?
I WONDER IF NAHO WILL WEAR A YUKATA.
HELLO...?
NARUSE! LONG TIME NO TALK!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HEAR THAT VOICE AGAIN.

A CLASS-MATE FROM MY HIGH SCHOOL IN TOKYO.

HEY, HOW ABOUT COMING OVER FOR SUMMER VACATION?

IT'D BE COOL TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

NAH...

I DON'T THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT OVER THE SUMMER.

I DON'T ESPE-CIALLY WANT TO SEE HIM.

THEN HOW ABOUT NEXT MONTH?

THE OTHER GUYS IN THE CLUB WANNA SEE YOU AGAIN, TOO.

'KAY?

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE APART, WE'RE STILL FRIENDS!

...

I COULD DO NEXT MONTH.

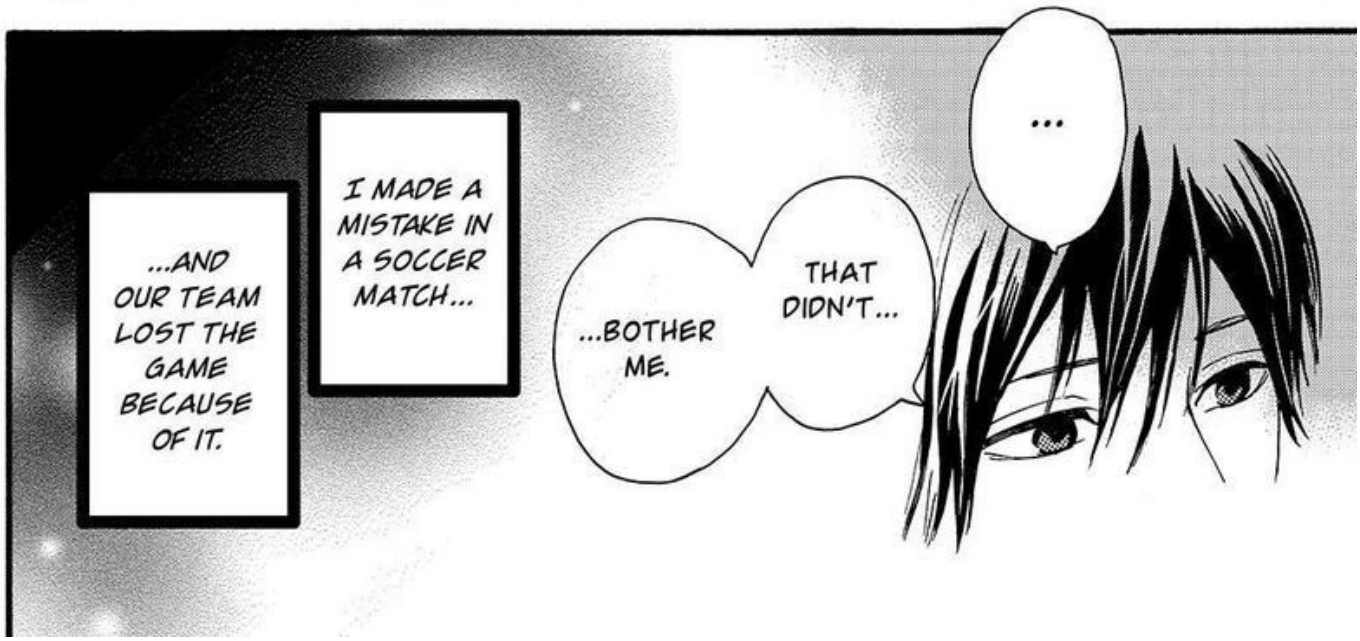
OH, WELL...

I GUESS THEY WERE MY FRIENDS.

NARUSE!

THERE'S SOMETHING WE WANNA APOLOGIZE TO YOU ABOUT.
SO LISTEN, NARUSE...
I KIND OF FEEL LIKE I ALREADY WANT TO GO BACK HOME.
AH...
WHAT IS IT?

I'M SORRY.
WE KNEW, BUT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HELP. AND WE FEEL BAD ABOUT THAT.
...THE SENIORS BULLIED YOU.
IN THE CLUB...
THAT'S WHY WE ALL WANTED TO SEE YOU.


...AND OUR TEAM LOST THE GAME BECAUSE OF IT.
I MADE A MISTAKE IN A SOCCER MATCH...
...BOTHER ME.
THAT DIDN'T...
...

EVEN THOUGH I WAS A FRESHMAN, I WAS TREATED LIKE AN ACE.

...BUT THE COACH KEPT PUTTING ME IN.

THE SENIORS TOLD ME NOT TO PLAY IN ANY MORE MATCHES...

WE LOST BY THAT ONE GOAL.

I GOT CALLED ON A FOUL IN FRONT OF OUR GOAL, AND IT BECAME A PENALTY KICK.

AND I KNEW YOU GUYS WEREN'T THAT FOND OF ME, EITHER.

THAT'S WHEN THEY STARTED BULLYING ME.

THE SENIORS DIDN'T SEEM TO LIKE THAT.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN OVER THERE, TOO?

HUH? WHY NOT?!

...NO, I DON'T.

HEY!

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE NOT PLAYING... BECAUSE OF US...

NOTHING LIKE THAT.

THAT'S WHY...

...I DON'T REALLY THINK OF YOU AS FRIENDS.

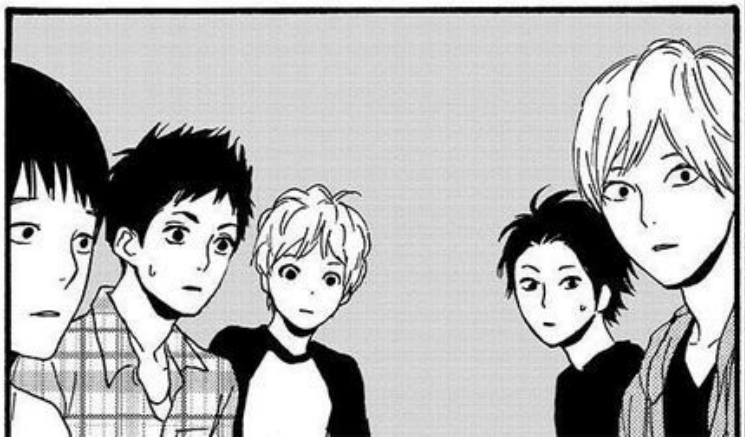
Ah!

HOW'S LIFE IN NAGANO?

YOU PLAY SOCCER THERE?

MAYBE I CAN TELL THESE GUYS.
MY MOM...
...COMMITTED SUICIDE.
AND IT'S MY FAULT.
THE REGRET EATS ME UP EVERY DAY.
I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF.
THAT'S WHY I'M THROUGH PLAYING SOCCER.

MAYBE THEY'LL LAUGH...
...AT ME.



EVERY DAY, I THINK...
...I SHOULD JUST DISAPPEAR.
THAT I'M BETTER OFF DEAD...

YOU'RE NOT THAT KIND OF GUY, NARUSE!
HA HA HA
YOU HAD ME FOR A SECOND THERE!
WHAT? IT'S A JOKE?
Don't do that! Ha ha!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, NARUSE?
HA HA HA
DON'T KILL YOURSELF, YOU HEAR?
THAT'S THE COWARD'S WAY OUT.
BESIDES, IF YOU DIE, IT'LL LEAVE A BAD AFTER-TASTE IN OUR MOUTHS.
I'M GLAD I DIDN'T TELL THEM.
THERE, SEE?
I FIGURED.

IT'S...
...NO JOKE.
...
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
CAN YOU TELL ME...
...YOUR NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH?
...NARUSE...
...KAKERU...

A HOS-PITAL?
WHAT IS THIS?
OH...
SWELL...
I LIVED.
KAKERU...
THANK GOOD-NESS.
I RAN SOME TESTS, BUT YOU CHECKED OUT OKAY.
WE'LL HAVE YOU STAY HERE FOR ANOTHER WEEK, THOUGH...
...AND AFTER THAT, YOU'LL BE EXAMINED AT A PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY.

DON'T EVER DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN.
I'M NOT GOING TO ANY HOSPITAL.

WHY NOT?
THE DOCTOR SAID ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TALK TO THEM.
I'M NOT GOING.

AFTER ALL...
...I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I DON'T WANNA GO.

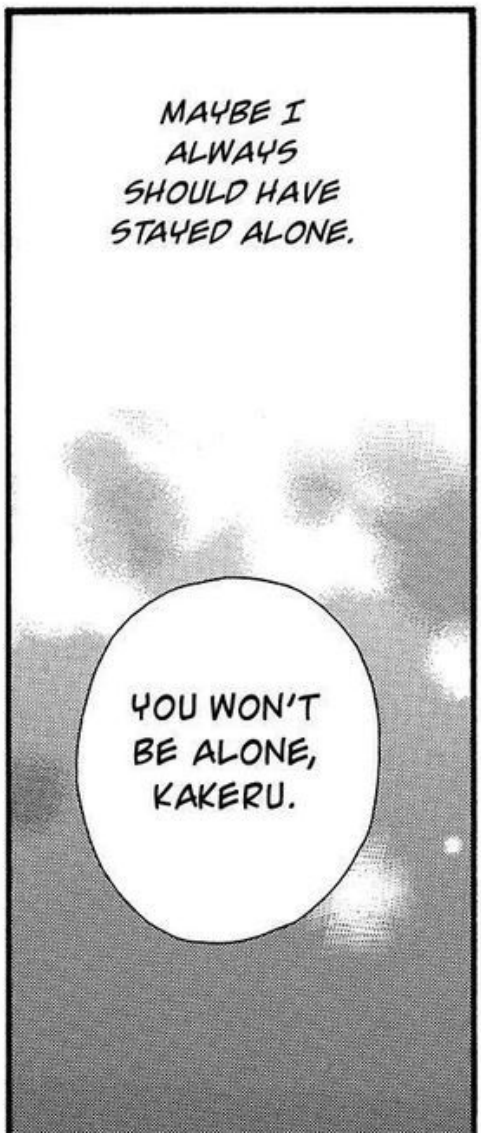
BUT...
I SAID I'M NOT GOING!
ガシャン
CRASH

I'M SORRY I COULDN'T DO ANY-THING TO HELP.
IF YOU'RE THAT ADAMANT ABOUT IT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO.
WELL, THAT'S FINE.
...AND LIVE.
I HAVE TO GET MY ACT TO-GETHER.
STAND UP STRAIGHT, LOOK AHEAD...
WHAT THE HELL...
...AM I DOING?
CAUSING TROU-BLE...
HURTING GRAND-MA...

HUFF
HUFF
カラン
CLANG
KAKERU!
MY LEG...
DAMMIT.
I'M SORRY.
...THAT'S MY FAULT.
ANOTHER LOSS...

"DON'T FEEL BAD, KAKERU."
"IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT."
I HAVE TO LIVE...
...BUT I HAVE NO HOPE.
BUT IF I'D DIED, THEN...
...I WOULDN'T HAVE MESSED UP THE RELAY.
WHAT WOULD A WORLD WITHOUT ME BE LIKE?
I HAVE TO BECOME STRONGER.
THIS ISN'T WORKING.
Suwa Hiroto
Are you free tomorrow? Let's bury that time capsule we were talking about last time!

THEY'D BE NO DIFFER-ENT.


MAYBE I ALWAYS SHOULD HAVE STAYED ALONE.
YOU WON'T BE ALONE, KAKERU.

I DON'T WANT THEM...
...TO EVER CHANGE.

THEY WERE ORIGI-NALLY...
...FIVE ANYWAY.
THEY WOULD JUST GO BACK TO THAT.

"I'M GONNA FORGET ABOUT MOM FOR THE MOMENT AND JUST HAVE FUN."
...AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.
LET'S FORGET ABOUT OUR TROUBLES FOR TONIGHT...
...NO, I'M NOT.
YOU'RE KIND OF GLUM TONIGHT.
WHY...
DON'T PATRONIZE ME!
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I DID.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW, NAHO?
...WOULD YOU SAY SOME-THING SO CRUEL?

...WHY DID THIS HAPPEN?
IF IT'S NOT MY FAULT...
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!
DON'T FEEL BAD, KAKERU!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
...HOW HARD IT'S BEEN FOR ME. HOW DYING SEEMS PREFERA-BLE!
NOW YOU SAY IT'S ALL RIGHT WHEN YOU HAVE NO IDEA...
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT IF I LEFT MY MOM ALONE.
YOU KILLED MY MOTHER.
...SO DON'T SMILE LIKE EVERYTHING'S FINE!
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING...

NO.
I'M NOT...
...SAYING THAT TO NAHO.
SLAP
STAY AWAY FROM ME.
I DON'T...
...WANT TO TALK ANYMORE.

I'M SORRY, NAHO.

...GOING TO HURT YOU ANY MORE.

I'M NOT...

I'M SORRY.

FROM NOW ON...

...LEAVE ME ALONE.

HAVE TO GET MY ACT TO-GETHER.

HAVE TO BECOME STRONG.

BUT...

...WHAT SHOULD I DO?

I WANT TO DO IT OVER.
ALL OF IT, FROM THE BEGINNING.
WE NEVER...
...SHOULD HAVE BECOME FRIENDS.
...SHE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE.
IF I...
...MOM, GRANDMA, NAHO, EVERYONE.
I WOULDN'T HAVE HURT...
...HAD KEPT MY PROMISE TO MOM THEN...

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.

"EVEN IF THE GOING IS TOUGH NOW, HANG IN THERE AND IT'LL GET BETTER."

BUT YOU DON'T KNOW THAT FOR SURE UNLESS YOU DIE.

"A LOT OF PEOPLE WOULD BE SAD IF YOU DIED."

PEOPLE OFTEN SAY,

HANGING IN THERE... LIVING... IS THE TOUGHEST THING THERE IS.

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE...

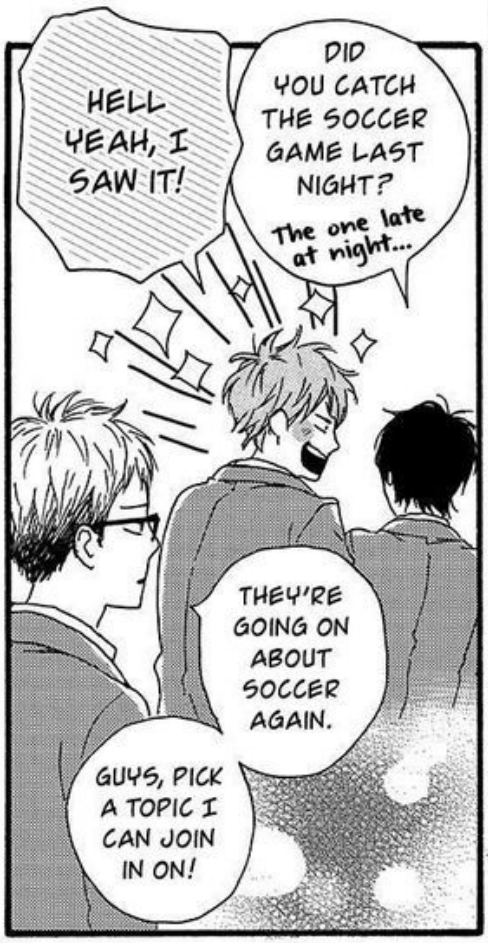
KAKERU.

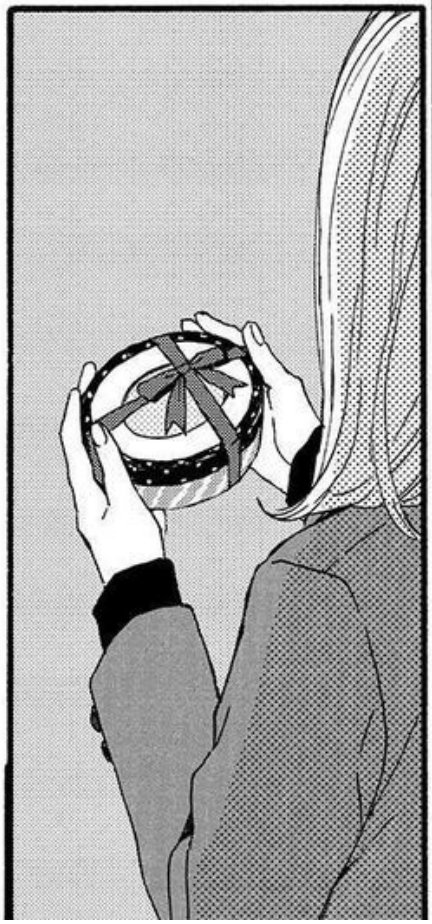
...I TOLD NAHO HOW I FELT ABOUT HER.

IF IT WOULD RELEASE ME FROM MY RE-GRETS...

...I'D BE READY TO DIE ANYTIME.

CONFESS MY FEELINGS?
WHY WOULD I?
AREN'T YOU GONNA DO THE SAME?
I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH NAHO...
...
...OR ANYTHING.
I THINK YOU AND NAHO...
...SHOULD JUST TAKE THE PLUNGE AND GO OUT WITH EACH OTHER.
YOU HAVE MY BLESSING.





...IF NAHO AND SUWA DO START DATING, I'LL HAVE PEACE OF MIND.

BUT...

THAT'S THE TRUTH.

I WONDER WHAT NAHO'S RESPONSE TO HIM WAS.

I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ASK.

IS THAT VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATE?
YOU GIVING IT TO SOME-BODY?
WAA!
...YEAH.
SOME-BODY YOU REALLY LIKE?
HUH...
...YEAH.
HUH.
IS IT SUWA?
SUWA, RIGHT?
SUWA, HUH?

"I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH NAHO..."

I'M A LIAR.

SHE SAID SHE WOULD MAKE ME LUNCH.

YEAH! SURE.

I'LL BRING YOU LUNCH TOMORROW.

THAT'S WHY I WAS KIND OF LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

...BUT NAHO LOOKED ME RIGHT IN THE EYE WHEN SHE ANSWERED.

I MEANT IT AS A JOKE...

...WATCHED FIREWORKS TOGETHER AT THE SCHOOL FESTIVAL.

THE TWO OF US...

...STUDIED FOR A TEST TOGETHER IN THE LIBRARY.

THE TWO OF US...

I'VE NEVER WANTED TO BE CLOSER.

"STAY AWAY FROM ME."

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

THAT'S NONSENSE.

"I DON'T WANT TO TALK ANYMORE."

NAHO.
GOOD MORNING.
YOU KNOW...
I WANTED TO WALK WITH HER.
IT'S COLD TODAY...
...ISN'T IT?

I WANTED TO ASK HER SOME-THING.

BUT MORE IMPORT-ANT THAN THAT...

IDIOT.

"IT'S COLD." SHEESH.

YEAH... IT IS COLD.

I NEVER GOT TO APOLOGIZE TO MOM.

...BUT I SHOULD REALLY APOLOGIZE.

I'VE BEEN IGNORING IT LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED...

...I HAVEN'T APOLOGIZED TO HER FOR NEW YEAR'S YET.

ゴト CLACK

I'LL APOLOGIZE THEN.

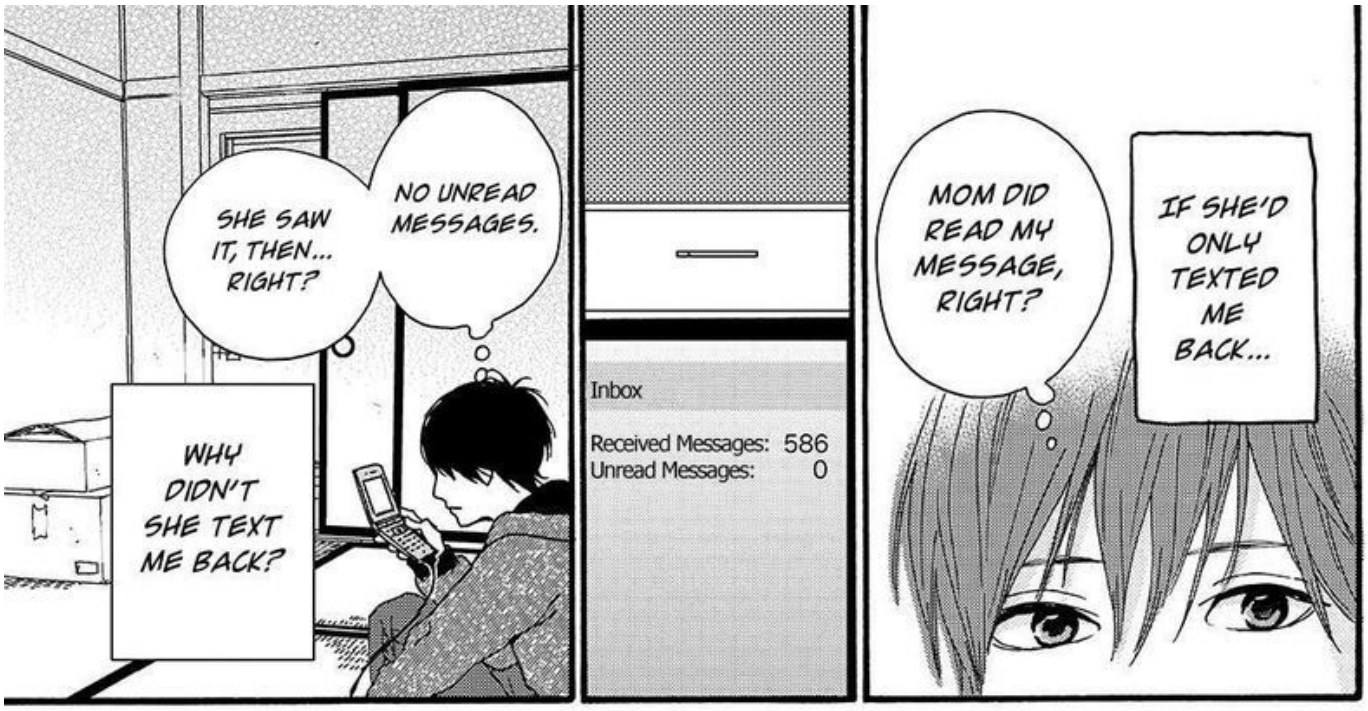
I'M SURE I'LL GET TO SEE MOM AGAIN WHEN I DIE.

MOM'S CELL PHONE...

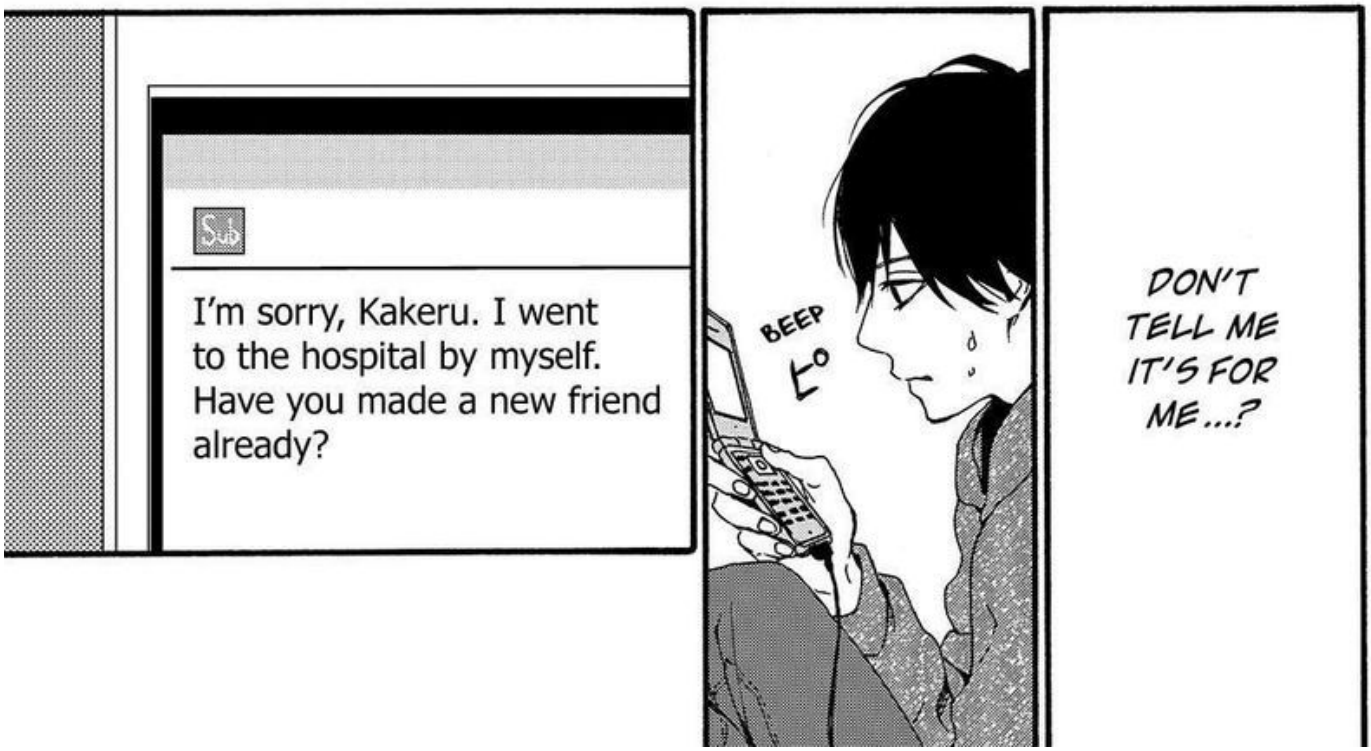
I WONDER IF MOM HAS A GRUDGE AGAINST ME.

HM?

SOME-THING FELL.


SHE SAW IT, THEN... RIGHT?
NO UNREAD MESSAGES.
WHY DIDN'T SHE TEXT ME BACK?
Inbox
Received Messages: 586
Unread Messages: 0
MOM DID READ MY MESSAGE, RIGHT?
IF SHE'D ONLY TEXTED ME BACK...

Draft Messages Box
Unsent Messages: 1
SHE SHOULD'VE CHEWED ME OUT...
AN UNSENT TEXT...?


Sub
I'm sorry, Kakeru. I went to the hospital by myself. Have you made a new friend already?
BEEP
DON'T TELL ME IT'S FOR ME...?

There are many things I have to apologize to you for.

I noticed that you were getting bullied by the seniors in your club at the high school in Tokyo.

I couldn't really ask you about it because you hid it from me.

But I thought changing schools would solve the problem, so I moved us here to Matsumoto.

I'm sorry for divorcing your father when you were young, even though you loved him.

But he was a violent man and I couldn't stand to see him hurt you. That's why I divorced him.

I didn't want you to join a club here and be hurt again.

I was also worried about whether you would be able to make good friends.

I'm sorry for being so selfish. I tried to help you, but didn't consider your feelings.

Ultimately, I'm the one who hurt you.

I'm sorry for getting in the way.
From now on, I want you to have fun, Kakeru. I want you to do what you want to do.
I'm sorry for getting in the way.
I've been so selfish.
I'M SORRY.
THIS IS MY FAULT. I'M SORRY.
KAKERU, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I WANTED HER TO TALK TO ME LIKE THIS IN THE END.
UNTIL NOW, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING.

DO YOUR SINS BECOME ATONED FOR?
DO YOUR REGRETS DISAPPEAR, TOO?
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE.
I WONDER IF ANYONE WOULD BE SAD IF I DIED.
I WONDER IF IT WOULD GET BETTER TOMORROW.
I WONDER WHO NAHO GAVE THAT CHOCOLATE TO.

キィ
SKREEEEEE
I GUESS NONE OF IT REALLY MATTERS.

CHAPTER 20

...AND TALKING ABOUT KAKERU MADE ME FEEL LIKE WE WERE ALL A GROUP AGAIN.

GATHERING TOGETHER LIKE THIS TODAY...

AFTER KAKERU DIED, THE REST OF US SORT OF DRIFTED APART.

THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS...
...ARE BEAUTIFUL, AREN'T THEY...
...KAKERU?
ALL OF MT. KOBO LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN DYED THE COLOR OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS.
SUWA AND I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR KAKERU HERE EVERY YEAR.

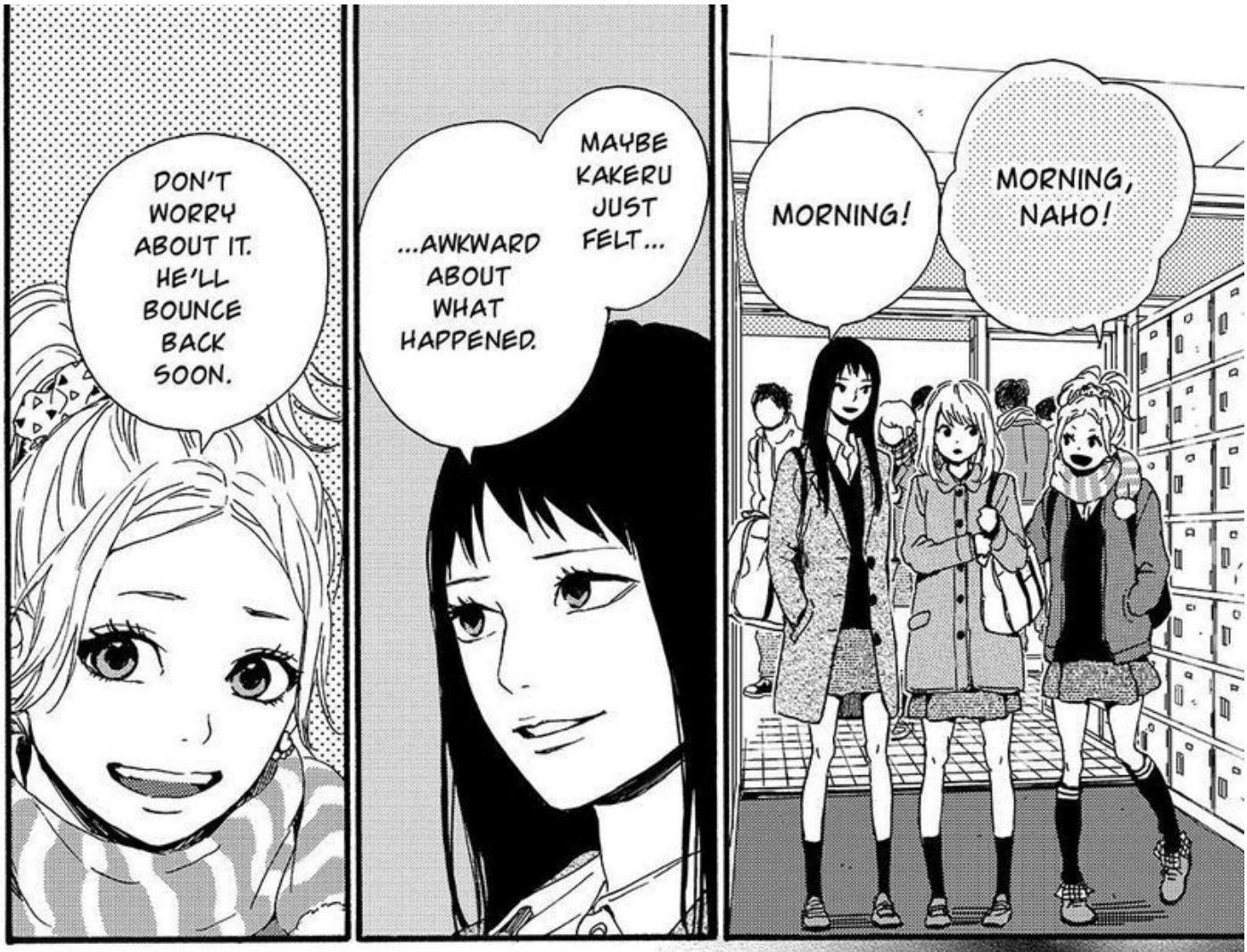
JANUARY 7TH

AS WINTER VACATION ENDED, THE FIGHT I HAD WITH KAKERU ON NEW YEAR'S EVE WAS STILL UNRESOLVED. THAT MORNING, I SAW KAKERU BY THE DOORS AT SCHOOL, BUT I COULDN'T ACT NORMAL.

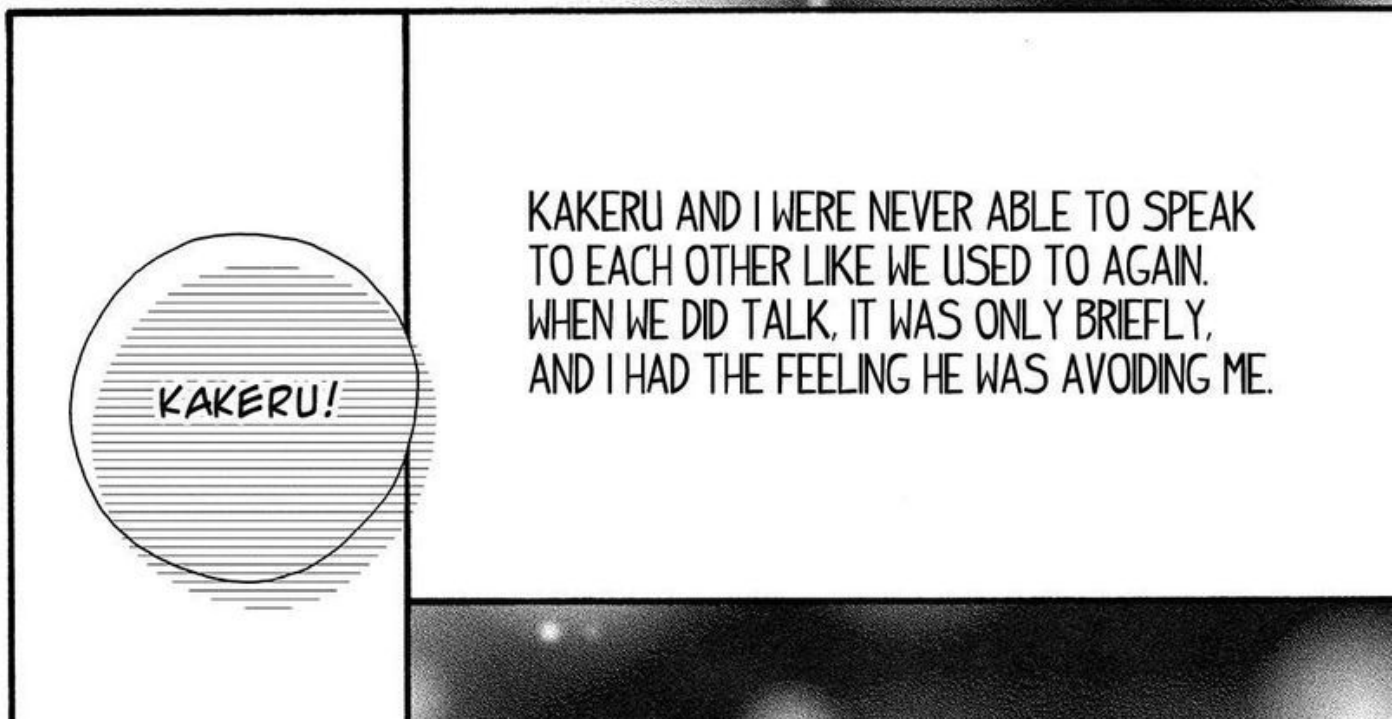
GOOD MORNING...
...KAKERU.

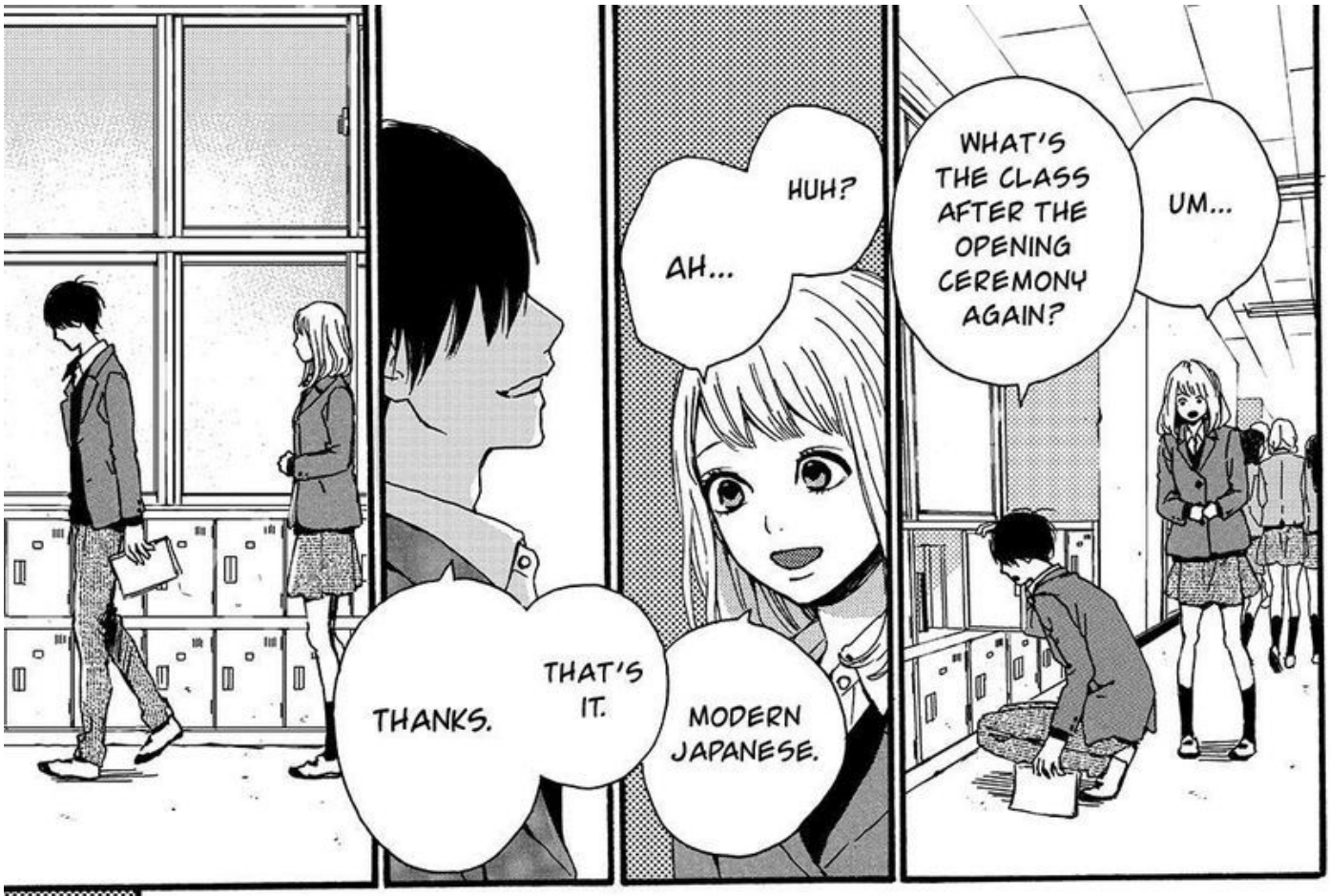
BUT KAKERU SAID "GOOD MORNING" TO ME AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. THAT PUT ME AT EASE.

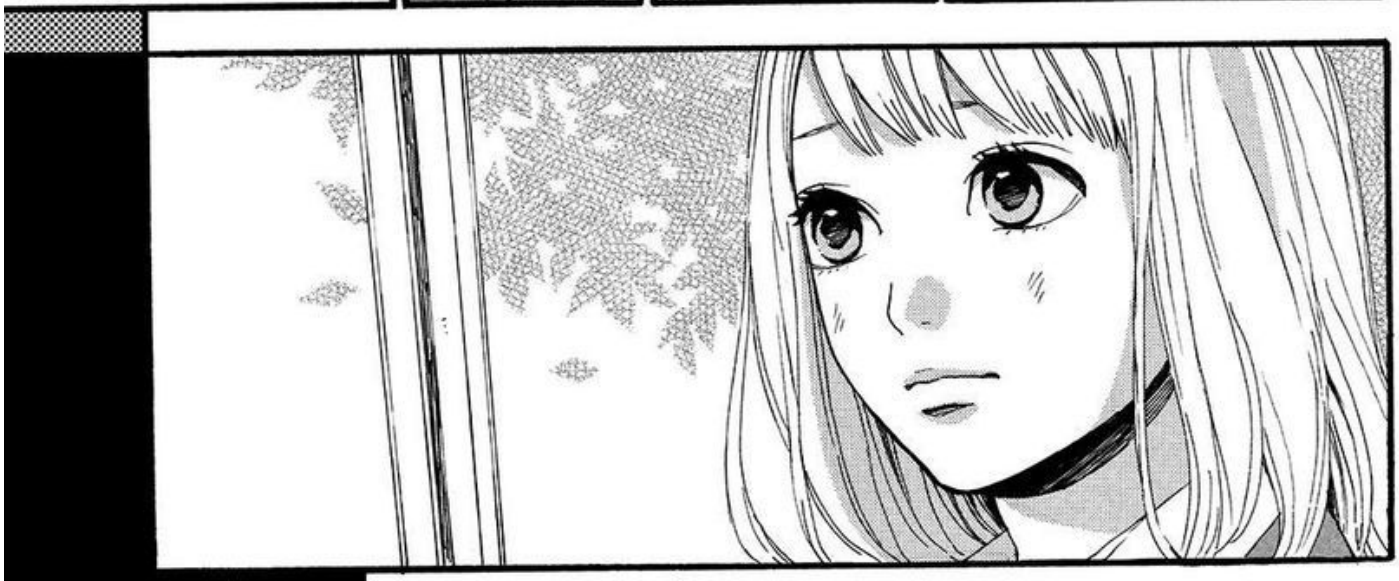
NAKA-YAMA, WAIT UP!
AH, SORRY.
MY CELL PHONE BROKE.
HUH?
I KEPT TRYING TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU OVER THE BREAK...
KAKERU...

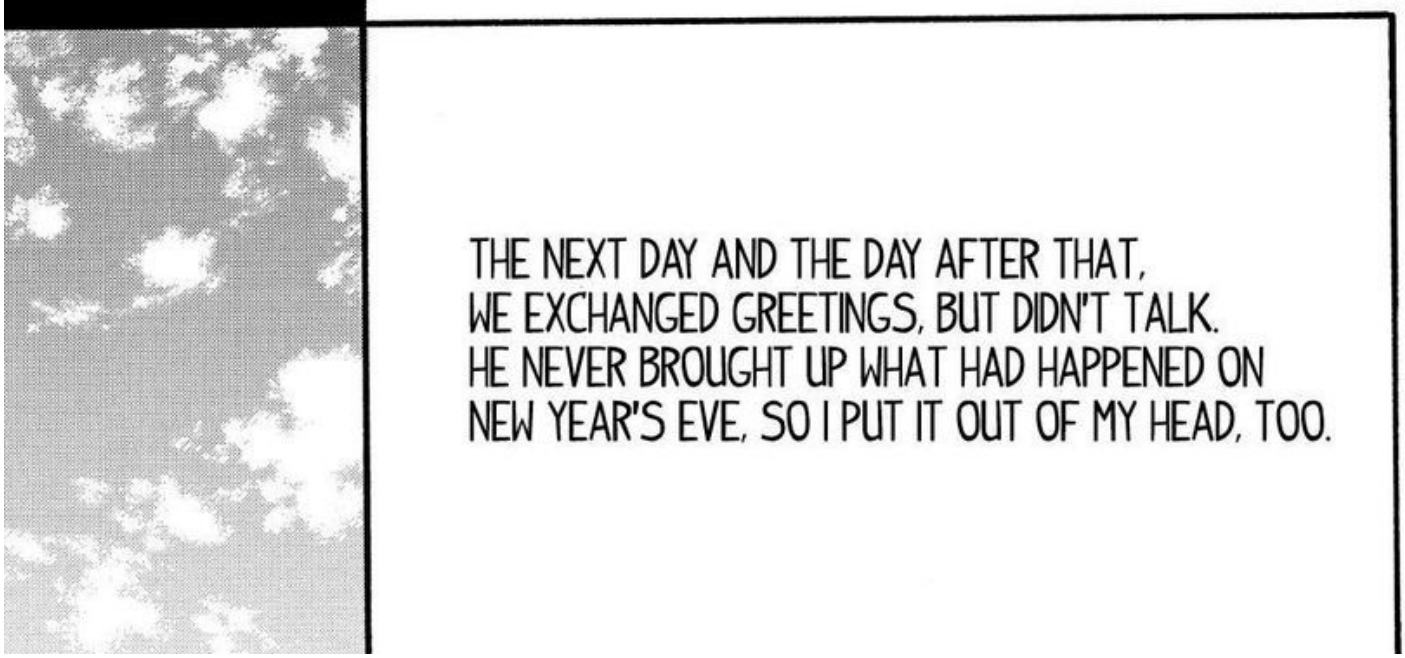

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. HE'LL BOUNCE BACK SOON.
...AWKWARD ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
MAYBE KAKERU JUST FELT...
MORNING!
MORNING, NAHO!

...YEAH.


KAKERU!
KAKERU AND I WERE NEVER ABLE TO SPEAK TO EACH OTHER LIKE WE USED TO AGAIN. WHEN WE DID TALK, IT WAS ONLY BRIEFLY, AND I HAD THE FEELING HE WAS AVOIDING ME.


UM...
WHAT'S THE CLASS AFTER THE OPENING CEREMONY AGAIN?
HUH?
AH...
MODERN JAPANESE.
THAT'S IT.
THANKS.




THE NEXT DAY AND THE DAY AFTER THAT,
WE EXCHANGED GREETINGS, BUT DIDN'T TALK.
HE NEVER BROUGHT UP WHAT HAD HAPPENED ON
NEW YEAR'S EVE, SO I PUT IT OUT OF MY HEAD, TOO.

I WANT YOU TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH KAKERU AND TALK TO HIM A LOT TO KEEP THE RIFT BETWEEN US FROM WIDENING.

KAKERU!

GOOD MORNING!

UM...

MORNING.

UM...

SUWA!

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU!!

EVEN IF IT DOESN'T GO WELL, BE SURE TO APOLOGIZE THIS TIME.

NAHO...
I'M SORRY I ACTED LIKE SUCH A HEEL.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, NAHO.
JUST THE OPPOSITE. IT'S MY FAULT FOR MAKING YOU WORRY.
NOT AT ALL! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR!
SO... UM...
I WANT TO MAKE UP...
...IF YOU DON'T MIND!
Ha ha!

THANK GOODNESS...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAD A FIGHT.
"MAKE UP," THOUGH?
HUH? REALLY?!
Ha ha ha!
CONSIDER IT DONE.
YEAH, SURE.

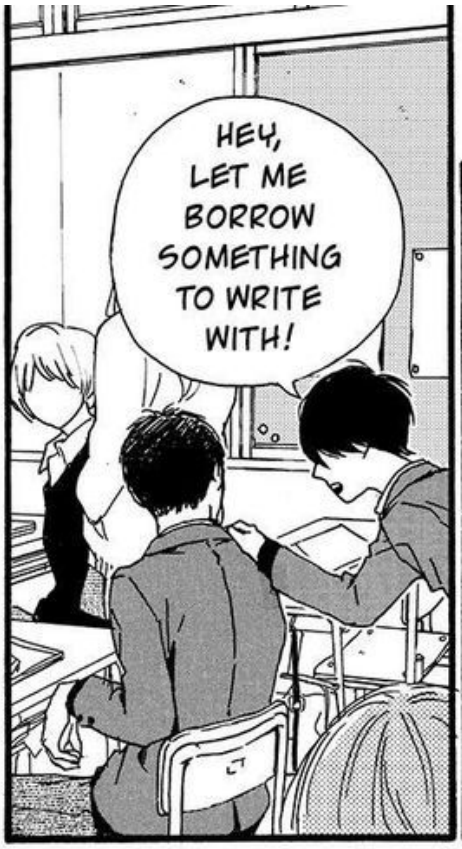
MAYBE WE CAN WALK HOME TOGETHER TODAY?
SO, UM...
RESOLVED SO SIMPLY, AND YET, I COULDN'T DO IT BEFORE NOW.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
KAKERU WASN'T ACTUALLY THAT BOTHERED BY IT.

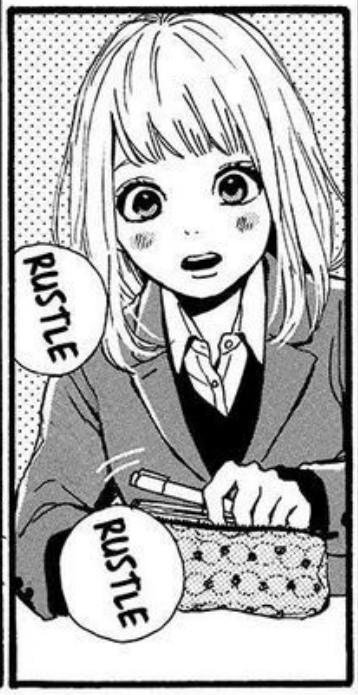
BUT I'VE GOT THE CLUB TODAY.
THAT'S OKAY.
I'LL WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE DONE!
I... I MEAN, JUST THE TWO OF US...

WHY DON'T WE DO IT ANOTHER DAY?
...
NUH UH.
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
HM...
BUT IT WON'T BE FINISHED UNTIL DARK.

IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A CURFEW OR ANYTHING.
WHENEVER YOU FINISH, KAKERU...
NO, I DON'T WANT YOU TO WAIT.
LET'S DO IT ANOTHER DAY.

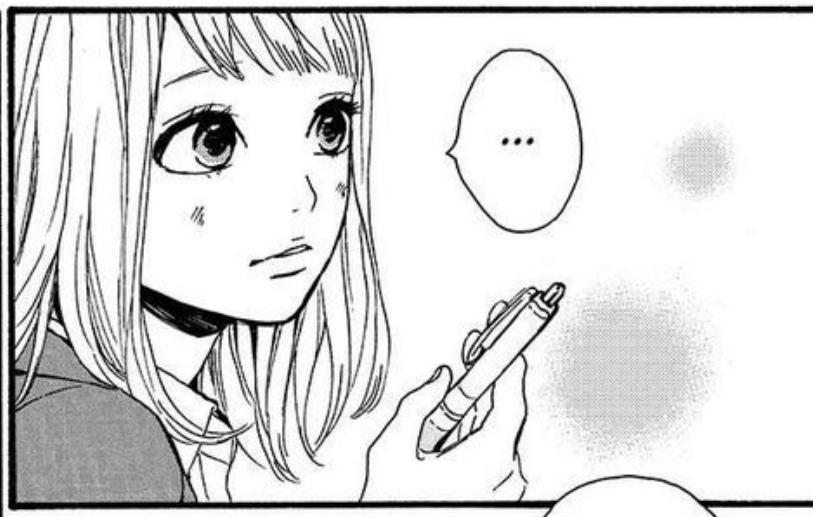
DING DONG
キーン
コーン
カーン
DING DONG
コーン…
CLASS IS ABOUT TO START, HUH?
"MAKE UP"?
NO. WE HAVEN'T RESOLVED IT YET.
KAKERU IS AVOIDING ME.
JUST APOLOGIZING ISN'T GOING TO CLOSE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US...
AH!


HEY, LET ME BORROW SOMETHING TO WRITE WITH!


RUSTLE
RUSTLE

I FORGOT MY PENCIL CASE.
!

THAT'S OKAY. I ALREADY BORROWED SOMETHING.
WOULD AN ERASER HELP...?
I HAVE AN EXTRA.
SURE.


...

WANT TO USE THIS?
KAKERU...
...

"I FORGOT MY PENCIL CASE."

"YOU CAN USE MY EXTRA MECHANICAL PENCIL AND ERASER."

"HUH?! ERASER, TOO?!"

LET'S GET STARTED.

Take your seats.

RATTLE

RATTLE

MONO

THANK YOU.

"WOW, NAHO. IT'S LIKE YOU KNEW I FORGOT IT!"

EVEN THOUGH I'M FOLLOWING THE LETTER, IT'S NOT WORKING OUT.

WHAT CAN I SAY TO KAKERU...

AT THIS POINT, IT'S LIKE THE TWO OF US ARE FURTHER APART THAN WHEN WE FIRST MET.

...TO MAKE HIM SMILE?

HOW CAN I GET BACK TO THE WAY WE WERE?

WILL TALKING TO HIM LIKE THIS REALLY BE ENOUGH...

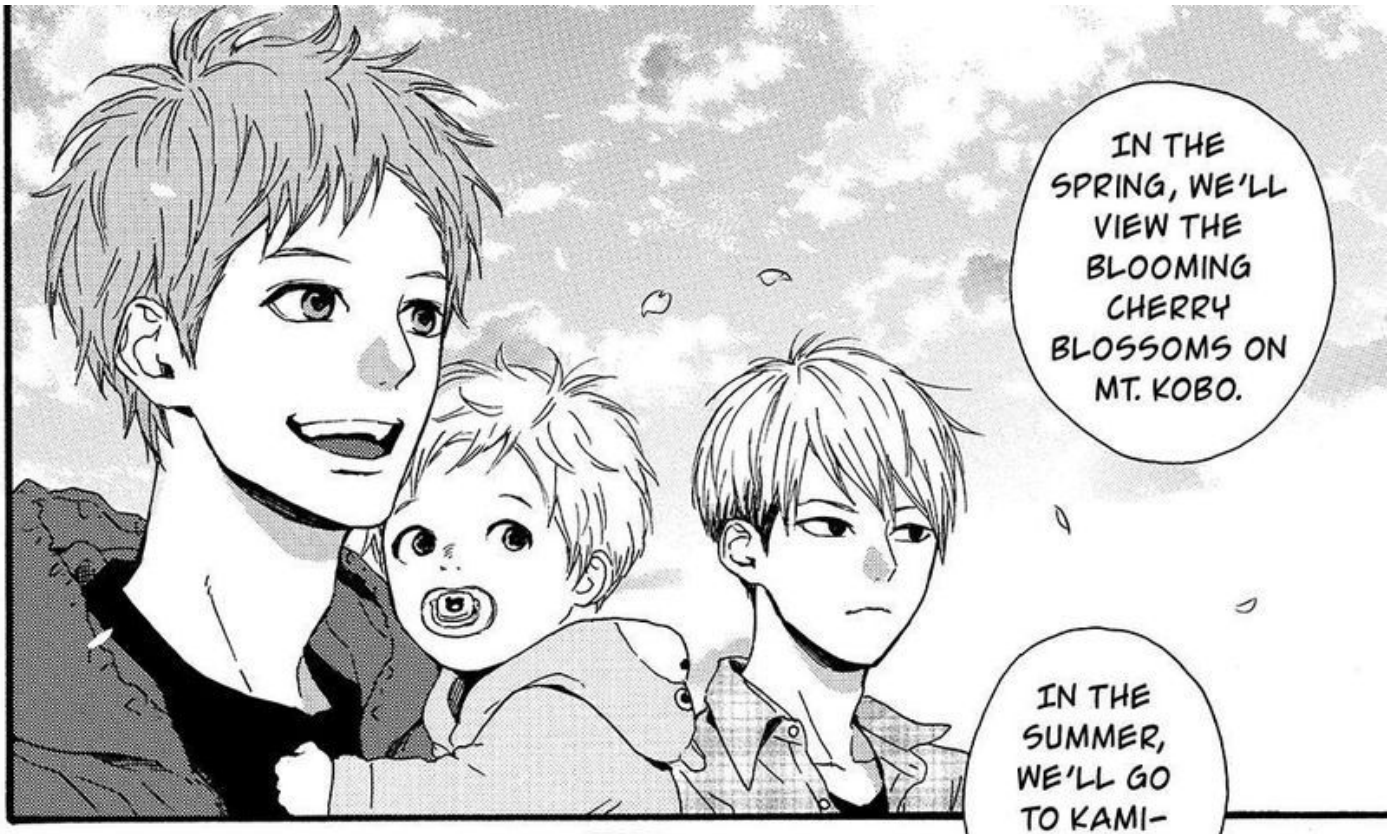
...TO CLOSE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US?

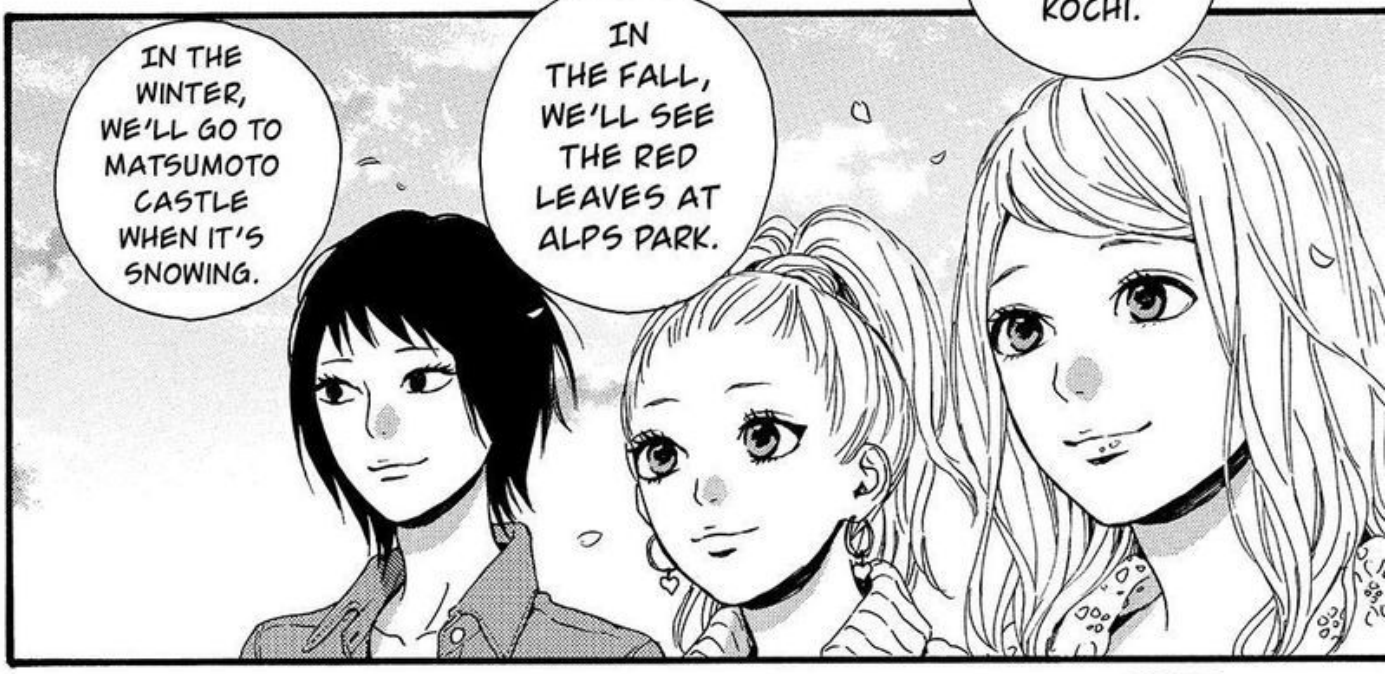
I MAY LOSE HIM BECAUSE OF WHAT I SAID.
THIS...
THAT...
IT ALL...
...MIGHT GO TO WASTE.
"I DON'T WANT TO TALK ANYMORE."
"STAY AWAY FROM ME."
MAYBE...
...HE ALREADY HATES ME.
TAKA-MIYA.
!

TAKAMIYA.
READ...
...THE NEXT PASSAGE.
...
WHAT'S WRONG, TAKAMIYA?
STOP.
TAP

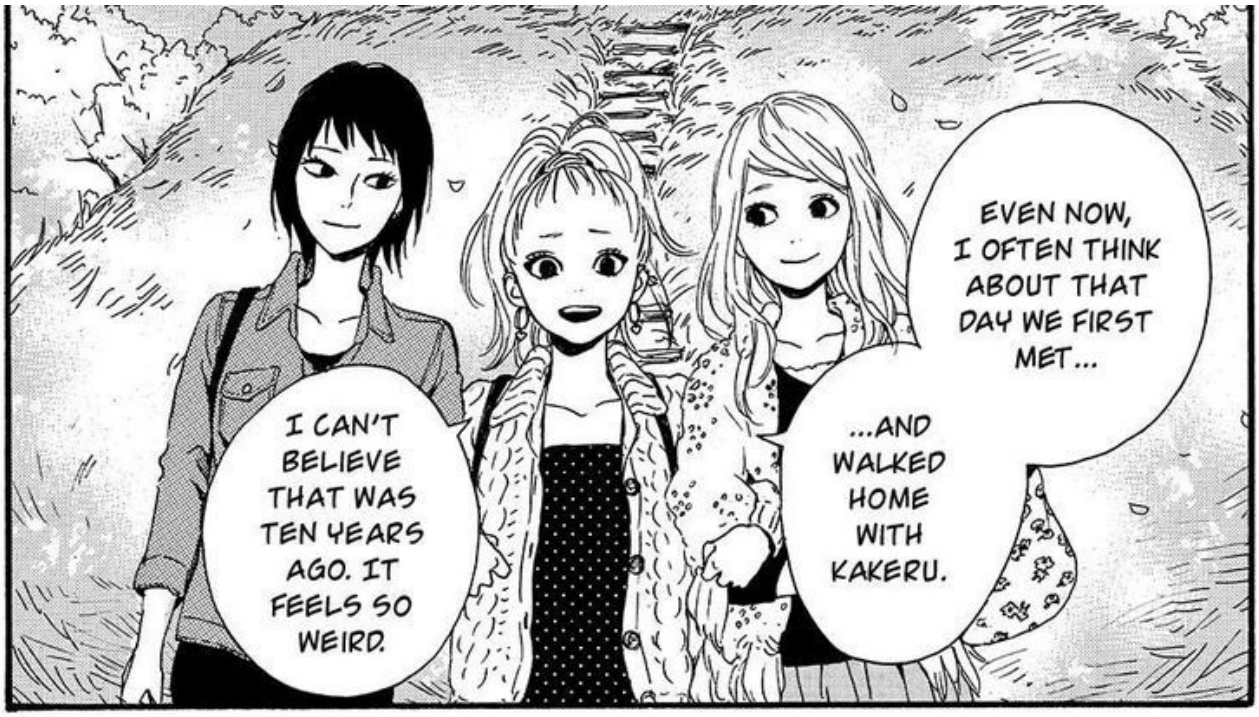
ガタ
RATTLE
I'LL...
...READ THE PASSAGE.

"I HAVE MY EYE ON YOU."
"I'M CURIOUS."
I WONDER IF KAKERU...
...STILL FEELS THE WAY HE DID BACK THEN.

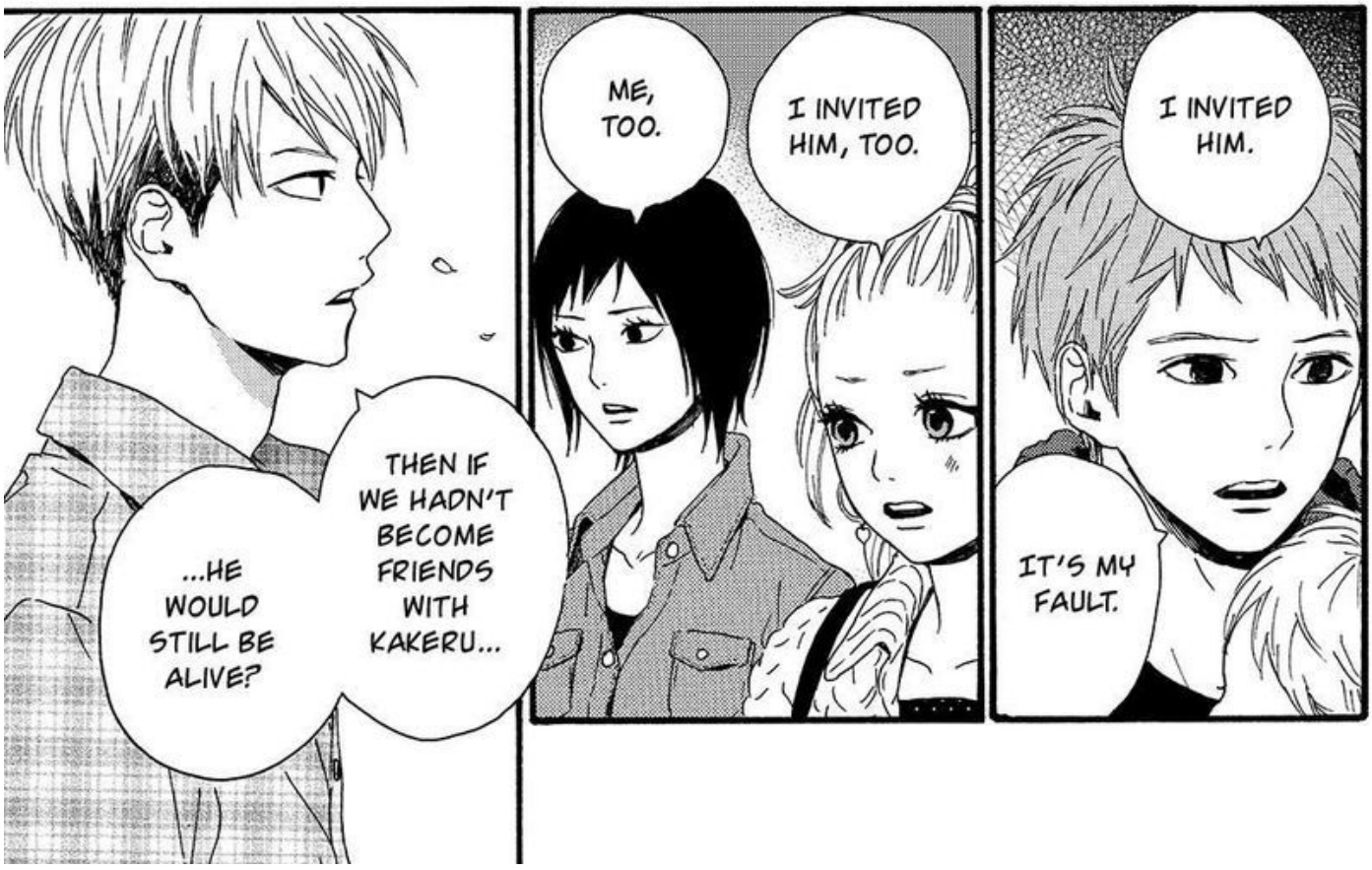

IN THE SPRING, WE'LL VIEW THE BLOOMING CHERRY BLOSSOMS ON MT. KOBO.
IN THE SUMMER, WE'LL GO TO KAMI-KOCHI.

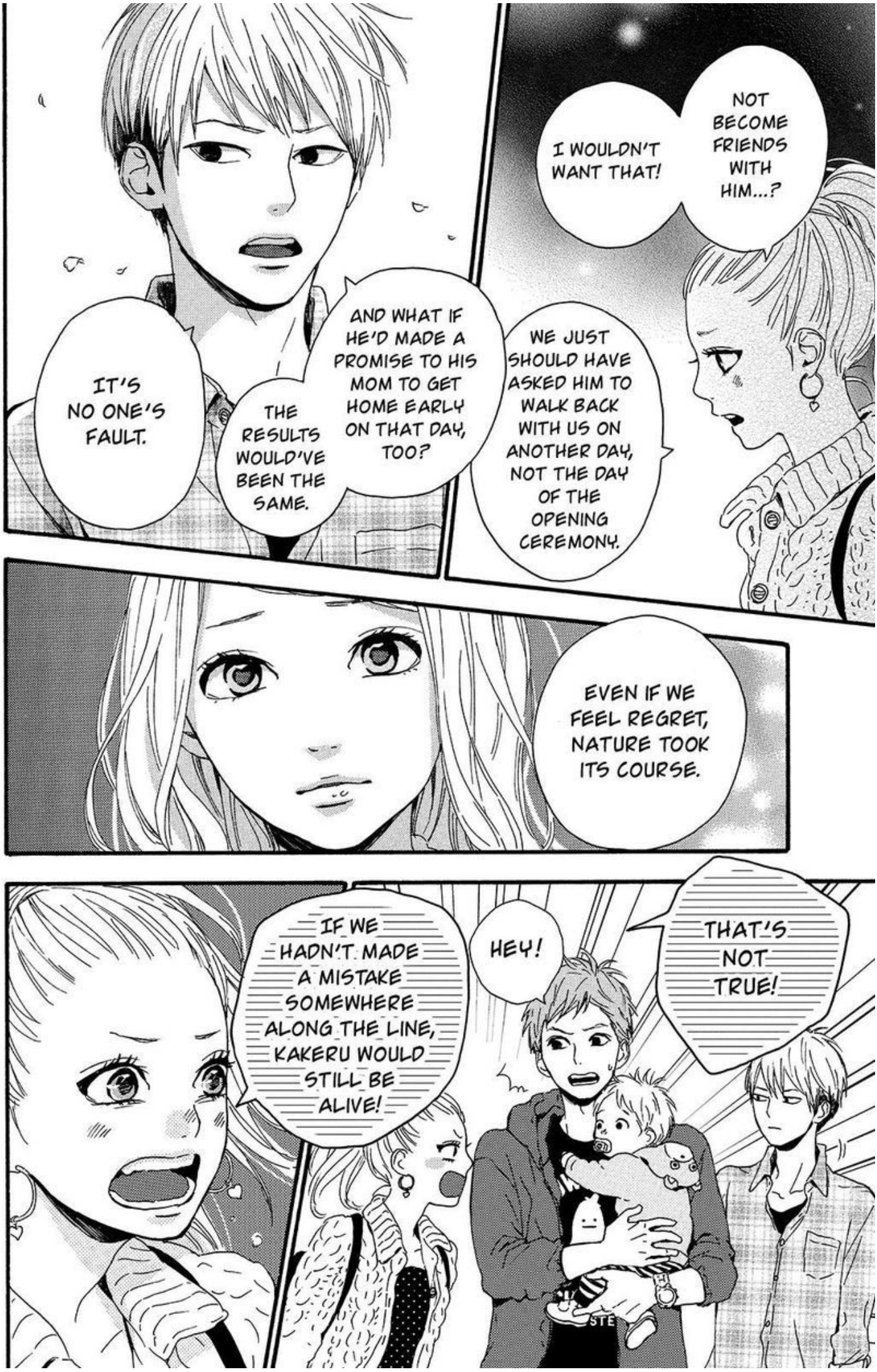

IN THE WINTER, WE'LL GO TO MATSUMOTO CASTLE WHEN IT'S SNOWING.
IN THE FALL, WE'LL SEE THE RED LEAVES AT ALPS PARK.

THE PROMISE THE SIX OF US MADE WHEN WE BURIED THE TIME CAPSULE.
LET'S FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE WHOLE THING.


I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WAS TEN YEARS AGO. IT FEELS SO WEIRD.
EVEN NOW, I OFTEN THINK ABOUT THAT DAY WE FIRST MET...
...AND WALKED HOME WITH KAKERU.

WHO WAS IT THAT DID THAT?
...INVITED HIM TO WALK BACK WITH US AFTER THE OPENING CEREMONY.
BUT...
...MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE...


...HE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE?
THEN IF WE HADN'T BECOME FRIENDS WITH KAKERU...
ME, TOO.
I INVITED HIM, TOO.
I INVITED HIM.
IT'S MY FAULT.


IT'S NO ONE'S FAULT.
THE RESULTS WOULD'VE BEEN THE SAME.
AND WHAT IF HE'D MADE A PROMISE TO HIS MOM TO GET HOME EARLY ON THAT DAY, TOO?
I WOULDN'T WANT THAT!
NOT BECOME FRIENDS WITH HIM...?
WE JUST SHOULD HAVE ASKED HIM TO WALK BACK WITH US ON ANOTHER DAY, NOT THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.
EVEN IF WE FEEL REGRET, NATURE TOOK ITS COURSE.
IF WE HADN'T MADE A MISTAKE SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, KAKERU WOULD STILL BE ALIVE!
HEY!
THAT'S NOT TRUE!

WAAAAAH!
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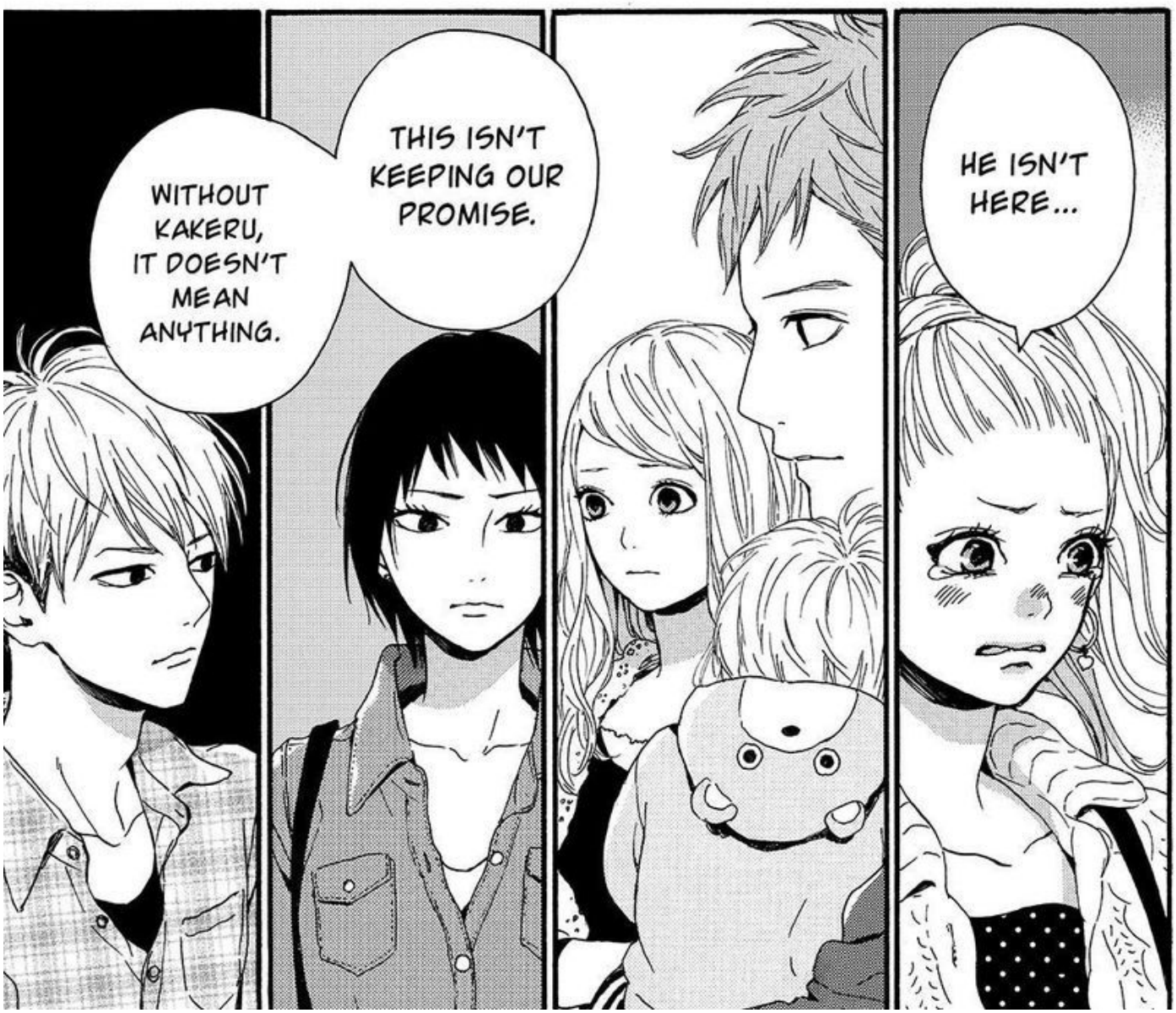
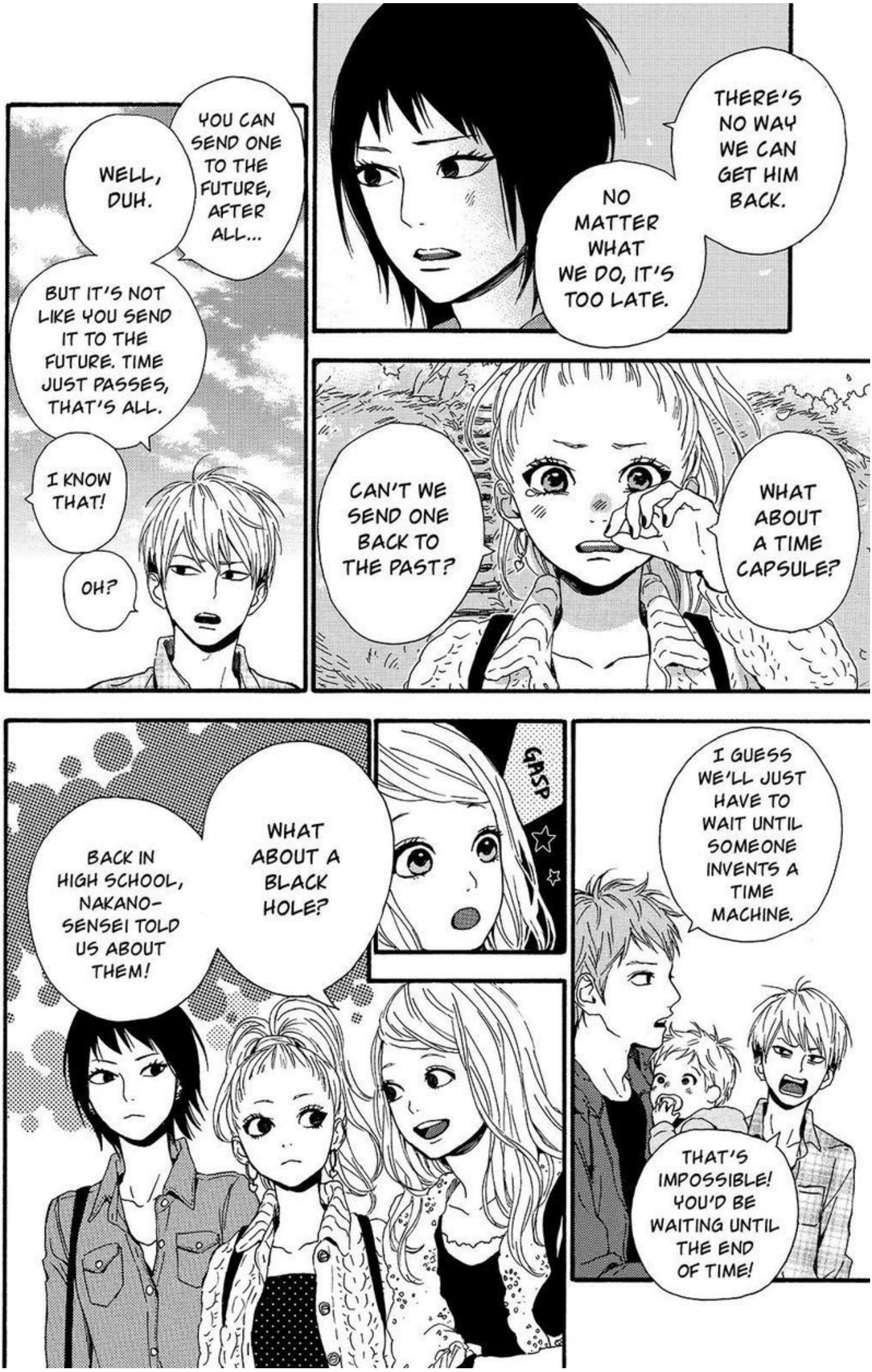
あぁ

DON'T FIGHT!
KAKERU'S WITH US TODAY!
UNH...


HE ISN'T HERE...
THIS ISN'T KEEPING OUR PROMISE.
WITHOUT KAKERU, IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING.


THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN GET HIM BACK.
NO MATTER WHAT WE DO, IT'S TOO LATE.
YOU CAN SEND ONE TO THE FUTURE, AFTER ALL...
WELL, DUH.
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE YOU SEND IT TO THE FUTURE. TIME JUST PASSES, THAT'S ALL.
I KNOW THAT!
OH?
WHAT ABOUT A TIME CAPSULE?
CAN'T WE SEND ONE BACK TO THE PAST?
I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL SOMEONE INVENTS A TIME MACHINE.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU'D BE WAITING UNTIL THE END OF TIME!
GASP
WHAT ABOUT A BLACK HOLE?
BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL, NAKANO-SENSEI TOLD US ABOUT THEM!

NAKANO-SENSEI SAID TIME TRAVEL MAY BE POSSIBLE WITH A BLACK HOLE.
A BLACK HOLE.

YOU WEREN'T LISTENING, WERE YOU?
SO, WHAT WERE WE TALKING ABOUT?
NAKANO-SENSEI! THAT BRINGS BACK MEMORIES.
I wonder how he's doing...

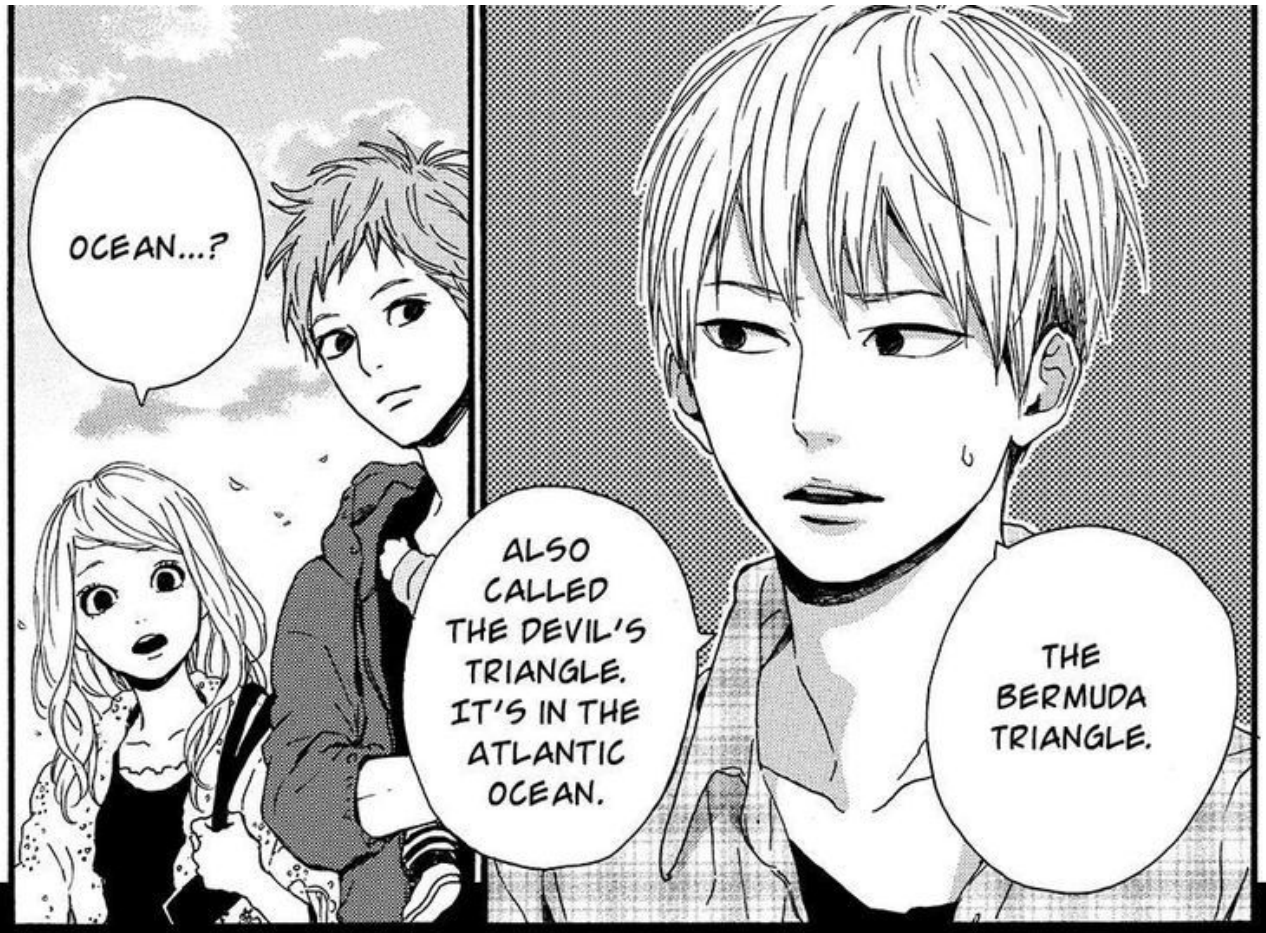
THAT'S IMPOSSI-BLE!
...WE'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THE PAST!
THEN IF WE GO TO SPACE AND ENTER A BLACK HOLE...
WHAT?!
All of what you're saying!

...SO GIVE IT UP!
THERE'S NO WAY TO FIX THE PAST...

A TIME MACHINE.
THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BUILD ONE OUR-SELVES.
THIS ISN'T SOME SCHOOL PROJECT!
I SAID IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

BESIDES, EVEN IF YOU DID ENTER A BLACK HOLE, YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THIS WORLD.
R... REALLY?

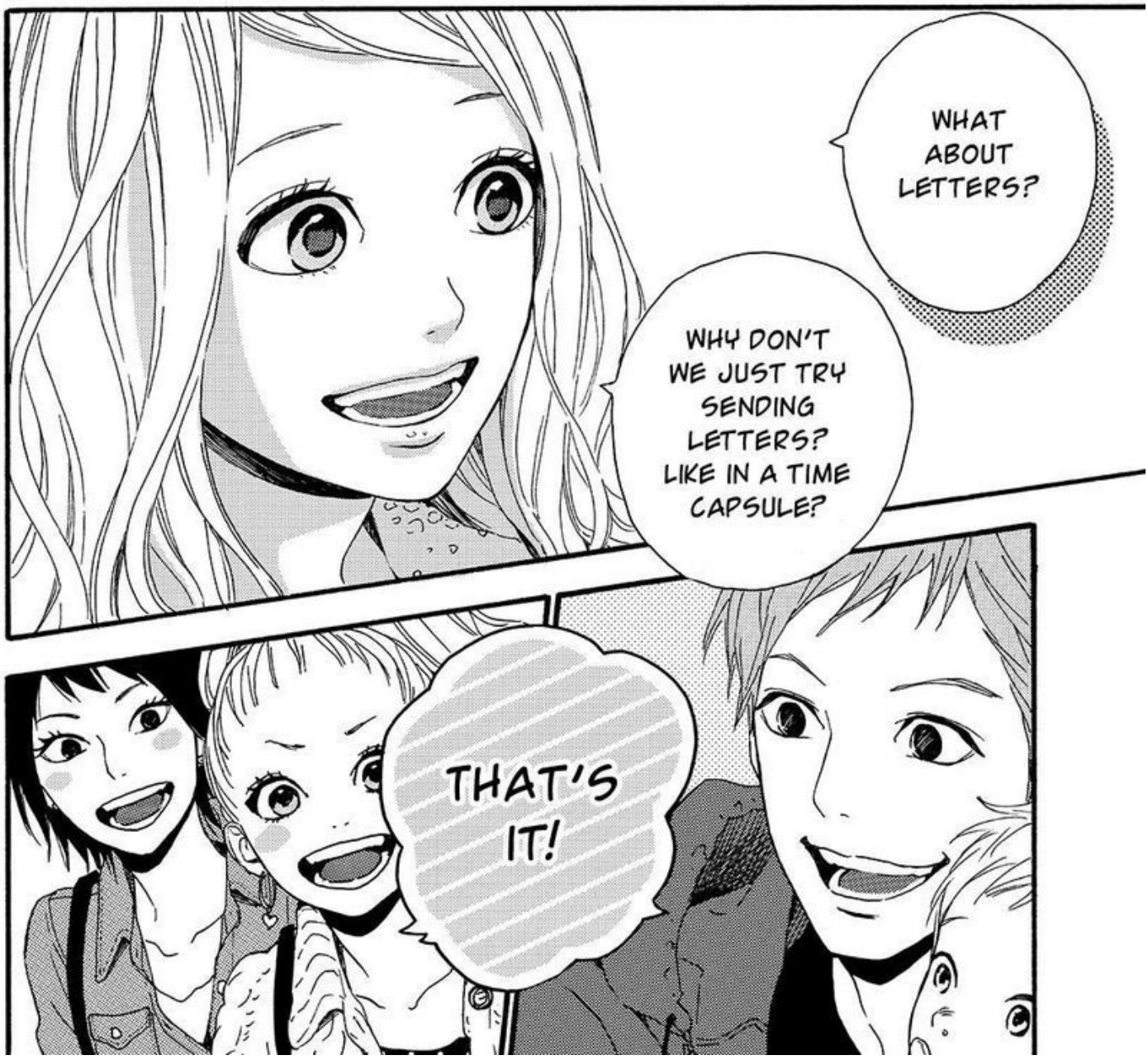
WELL, THERE IS A PLACE ON EARTH...
...CALLED A BLACK HOLE.
...
WH...
WHERE?! WHERE?! WHERE?!
IT'S JUST A MYTH, AND ALL...
...SO DON'T...
WHERE IS IT?!


OCEAN...?
ALSO CALLED THE DEVIL'S TRIANGLE. IT'S IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.
THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE.

ONE HYPOTHESIS GOES THAT THERE'S A BLACK HOLE.
...HAVE SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE.
FOR CENTURIES, SHIPS AND PLANES PASSING THROUGH THAT AREA...

THAT'S WHAT SOME PEOPLE SPECU-LATE.
...TRAVELED THROUGH TIME?
THEN MAYBE THOSE VANISHING SHIPS AND PLANES...

LET'S TRY GOING THERE!
BUT EVEN IF WE DID TRAVEL THROUGH TIME, WHO KNOWS WHERE WE'D END UP?
AND EITHER WAY, WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO RETURN, RIGHT?
IT ISN'T A LEGEND!
TIME TRAVEL ISN'T POSSIBLE...
BUT RECENTLY...
...THOSE MYSTERIES HAVE BEEN CLEARED UP, SO IT'S ONLY A LEGEND.

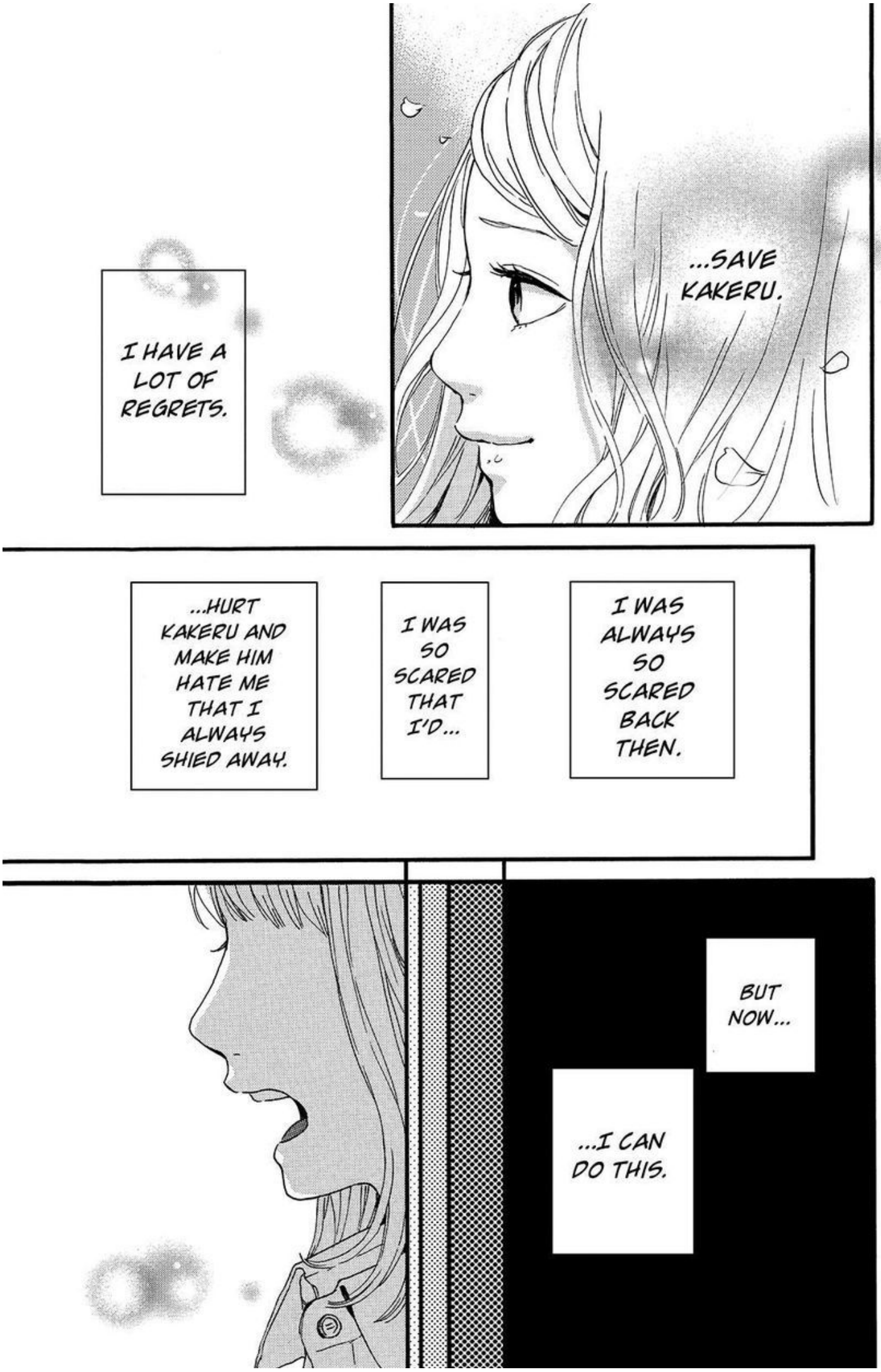

WHAT ABOUT LETTERS?
WHY DON'T WE JUST TRY SENDING LETTERS? LIKE IN A TIME CAPSULE?
THAT'S IT!

THAT'S IMPOSSI-BLE!
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF IT GOT SENT TO THE FUTURE INSTEAD OF THE PAST?
AND EVEN IF YOU SENT IT TO THE PAST, YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE IT WOULD BE DELIVERED!
HOW WOULD YOU GET LETTERS TO OUR PAST SELVES?
IN THIS TIME CAPSULE...
...DO YOU PLAN ON LEAVING A NOTE, LIKE, "PLEASE DELIVER THESE LETTERS TO OUR SECOND-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL SELVES IN APRIL 2012 AT THESE ADDRESSES"?
RIDICULOUS!
LIKE I KEEP SAYING, TIME TRAVEL IS IMPOSS...
THAT'S IT!

BUT IF WE DO...
WE'D HAVE TO MAKE A MIRACLE HAPPEN.
IT WON'T.
NO WAY.
...WE MAY BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE FUTURE!
WON'T WORK.
IF WE WRITE LETTERS TO OUR PAST SELVES AND PUT THEM OUT TO SEA...
LET'S GO WITH THAT!

...WE CAN SAVE KAKERU.

I WANT TO...


...SAVE KAKERU.
I HAVE A LOT OF REGRETS.
...HURT KAKERU AND MAKE HIM HATE ME THAT I ALWAYS SHIED AWAY.
I WAS SO SCARED THAT I'D...
I WAS ALWAYS SO SCARED BACK THEN.
BUT NOW...
...I CAN DO THIS.

KAKERU!
...I DON'T CARE.
NOW...

WAIT...
...UNTIL VALEN-TINE'S DAY!
WHATEVER YOU DO...
...WAIT 'TIL THEN!
...LOSE KAKERU.
I JUST DON'T WANT TO...
...OR HE HATES ME, FINE.
IF I HURT HIM...

WE MAY HAVE...
...LOST KAKERU...
...BECAUSE OF SOMETHING I SAID.

...THAT CAN'T...
...AND A FUTURE...
...THERE'S A FUTURE THAT CAN BE CHANGED...
IF...
CHAPTER 21

KAKERU...
GOOD MORNING!
MORNING!

FEBRUARY 14TH
THE DAY BEFORE KAKERU DIES.

MAKE VALENTINE'S CHOCOLATE IN HOME EC.
I MADE CHOCOLATE FOR KAKERU WITHOUT LETTING ANYONE KNOW.

NAHO'S CHOCOLATE IS SO CUTE!

GOOD LUCK!

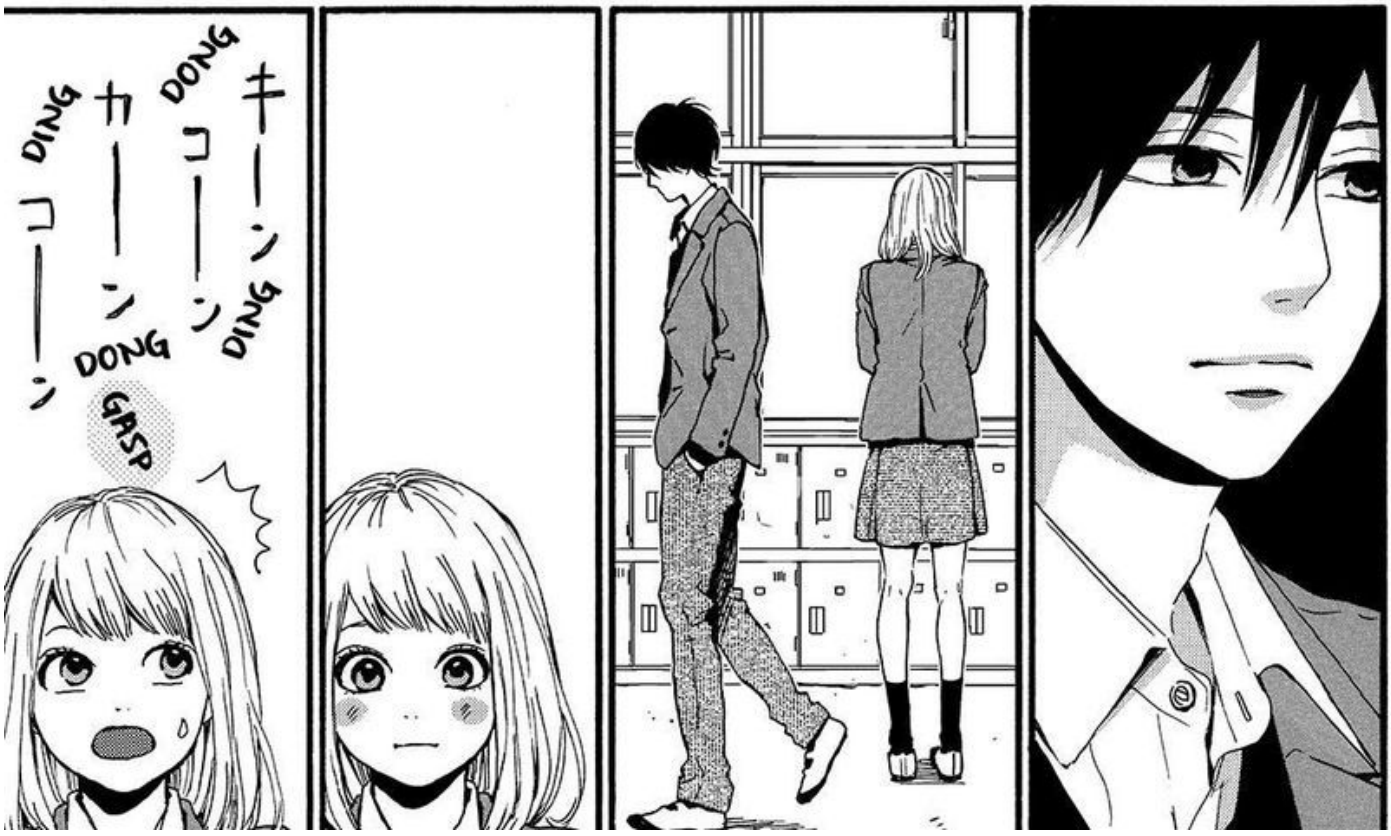
...TO GET IT.

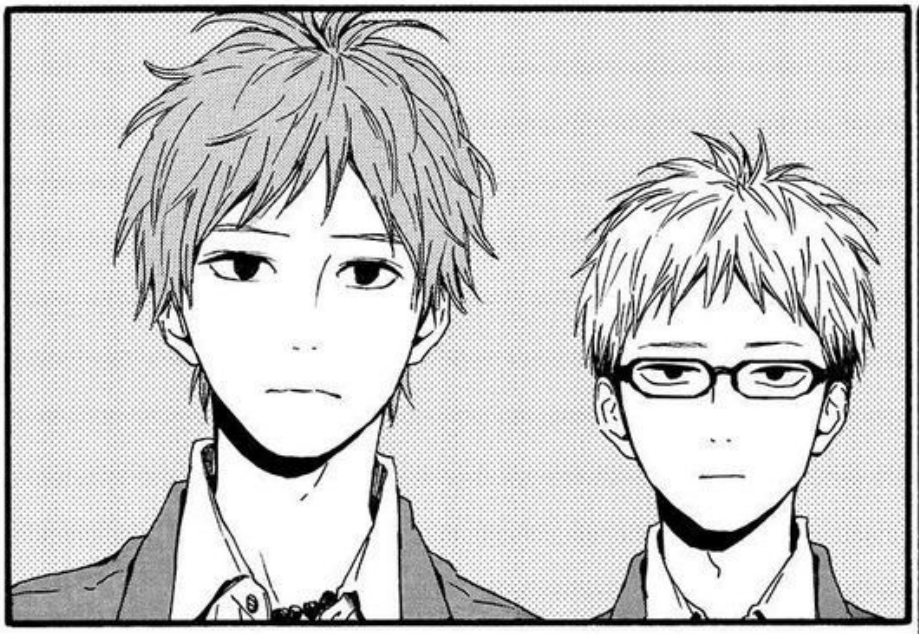
I'M SURE KAKERU WILL BE HAPPY...

YEAH!

THE PLAN WAS TO GIVE HIM THE CHOCOLATE AND TELL HIM HOW I REALLY FELT. BUT I COULDN'T START A CONVERSATION WITH HIM, EVEN THOUGH I HAD PLENTY OF CHANCES.

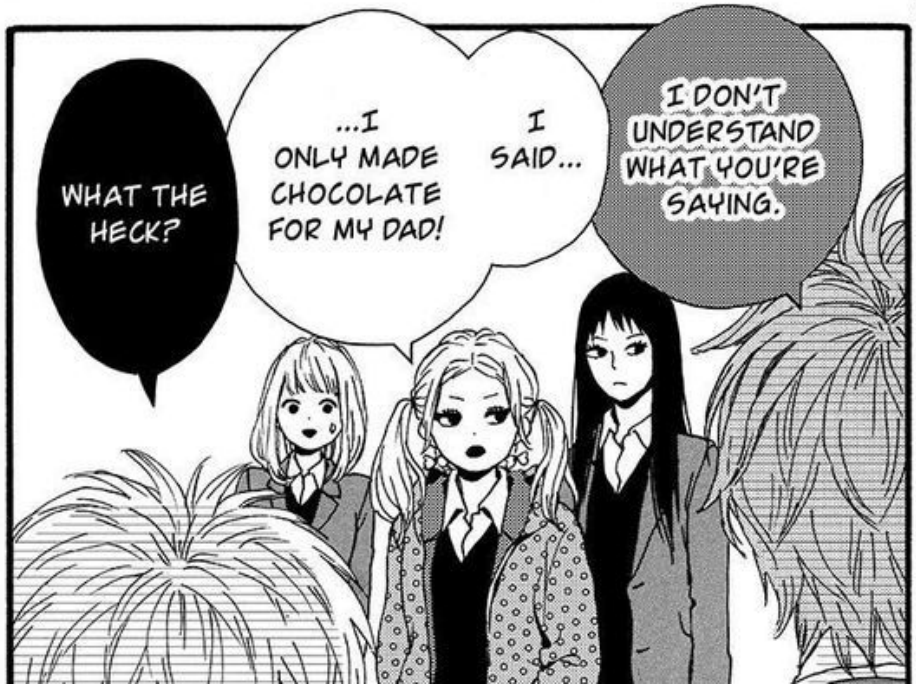
THE FIRST TIME WAS AFTER HOME EC, WHEN KAKERU SAW THE CHOCOLATE I WAS HOLDING AND ASKED ME WHO IT WAS FOR.





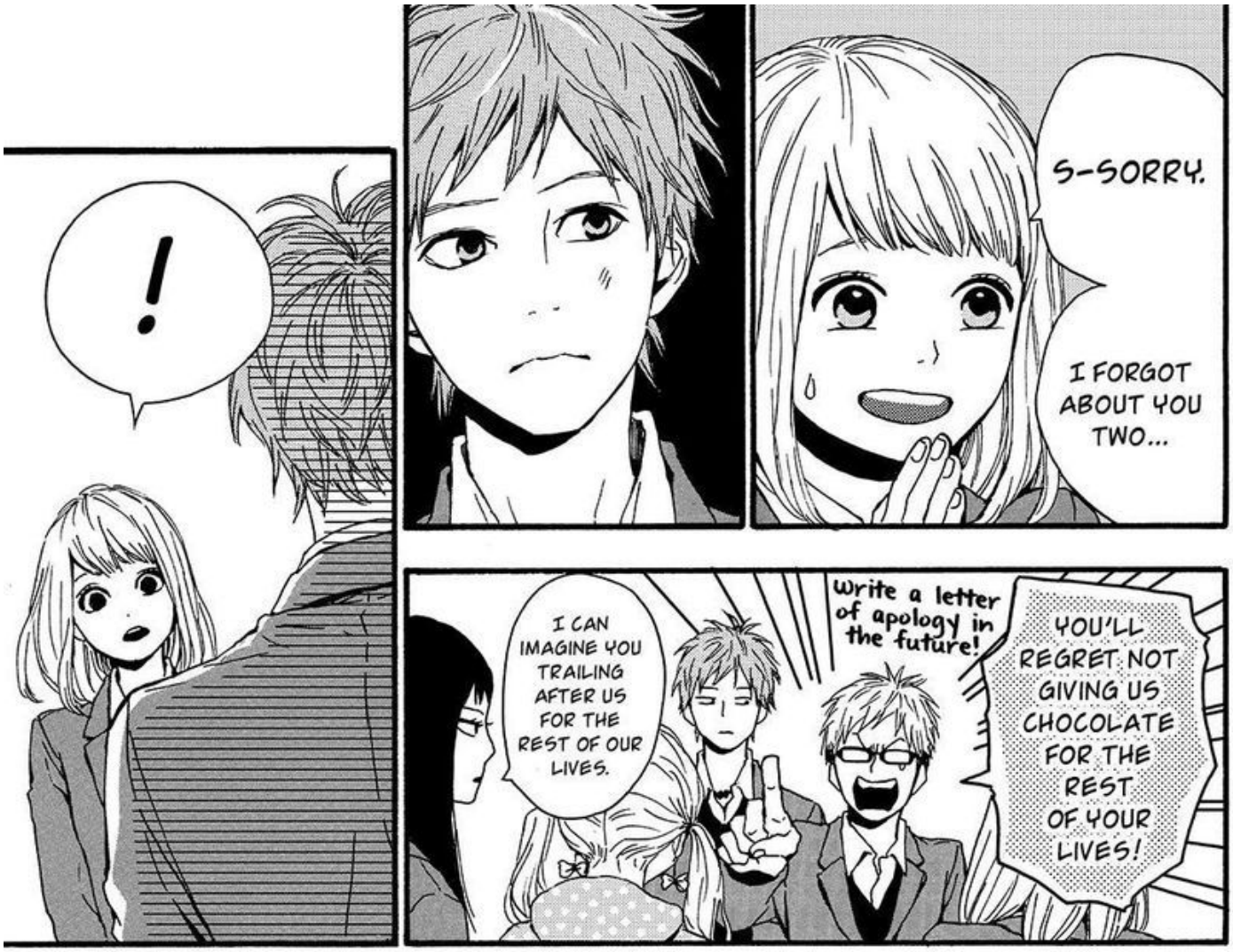
I WAS...

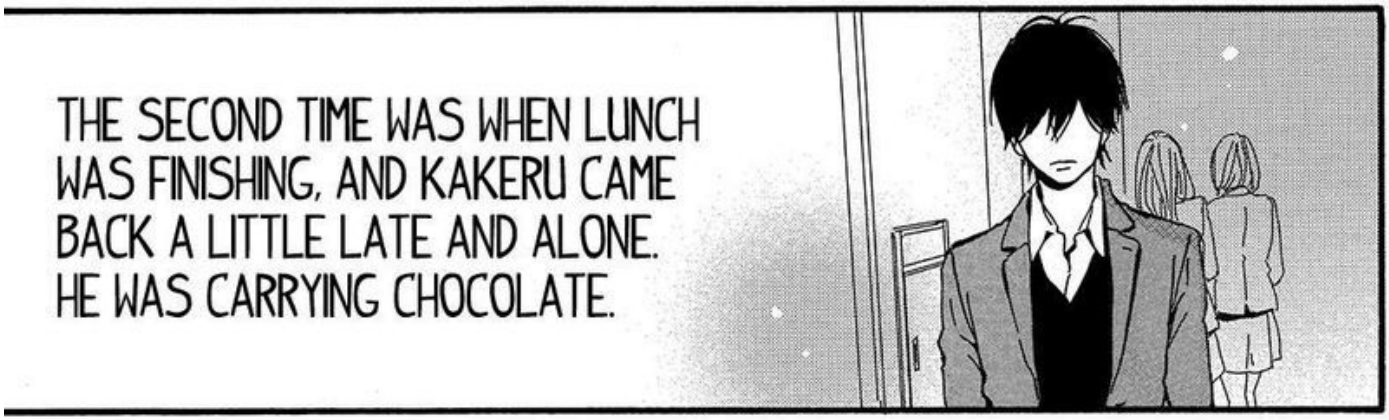
...WAITING FOR KAKERU TO SAY SOMETHING TO ME.



BUT I'M THE ONE...

...WHO HAS TO MAKE THE MOVE.


S-SORRY.
I FORGOT ABOUT YOU TWO...
!
Write a letter of apology in the future!
I CAN IMAGINE YOU TRAILING AFTER US FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.
YOU'LL REGRET NOT GIVING US CHOCOLATE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES!

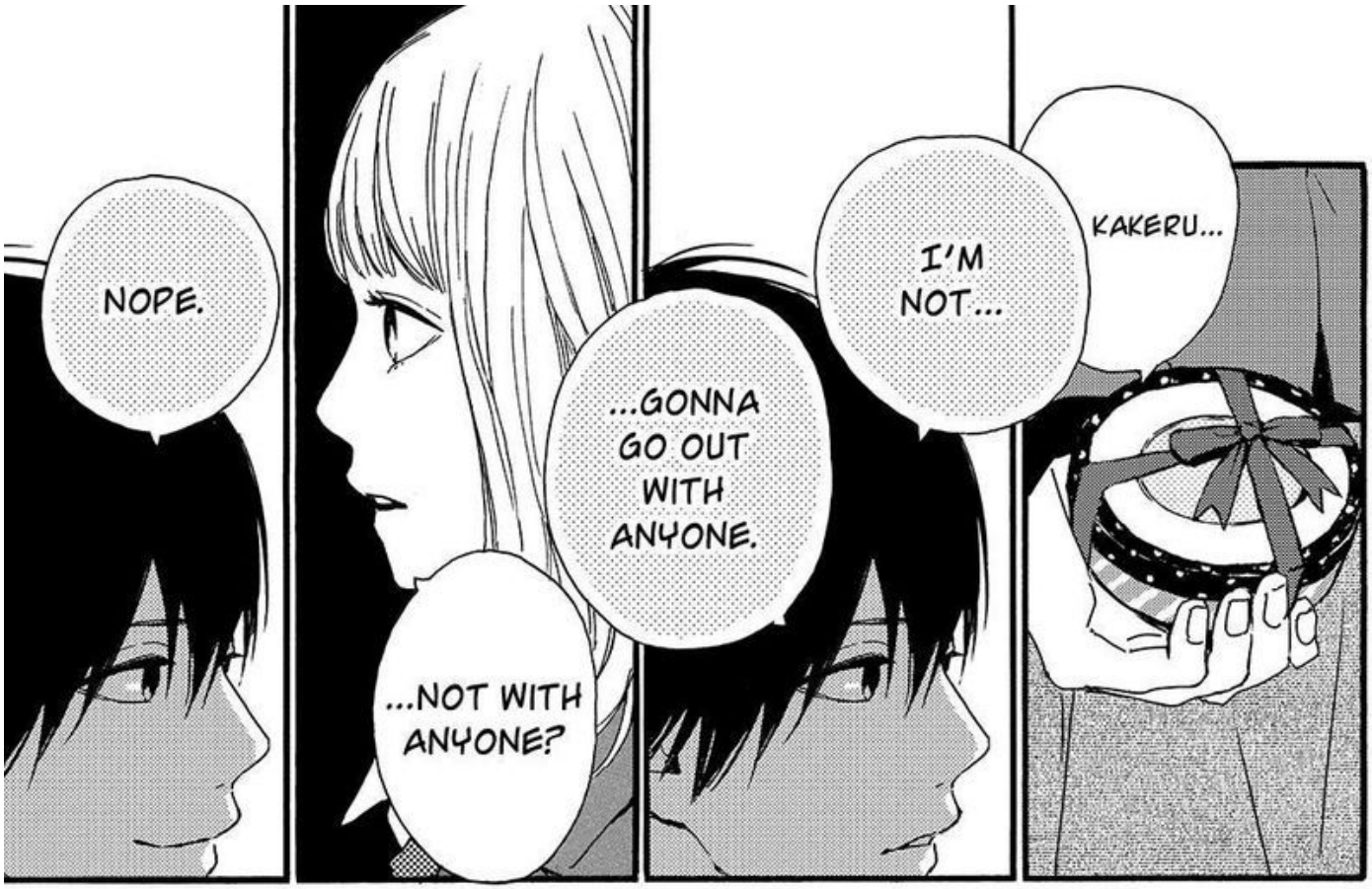

THE SECOND TIME WAS WHEN LUNCH WAS FINISHING, AND KAKERU CAME BACK A LITTLE LATE AND ALONE. HE WAS CARRYING CHOCOLATE.

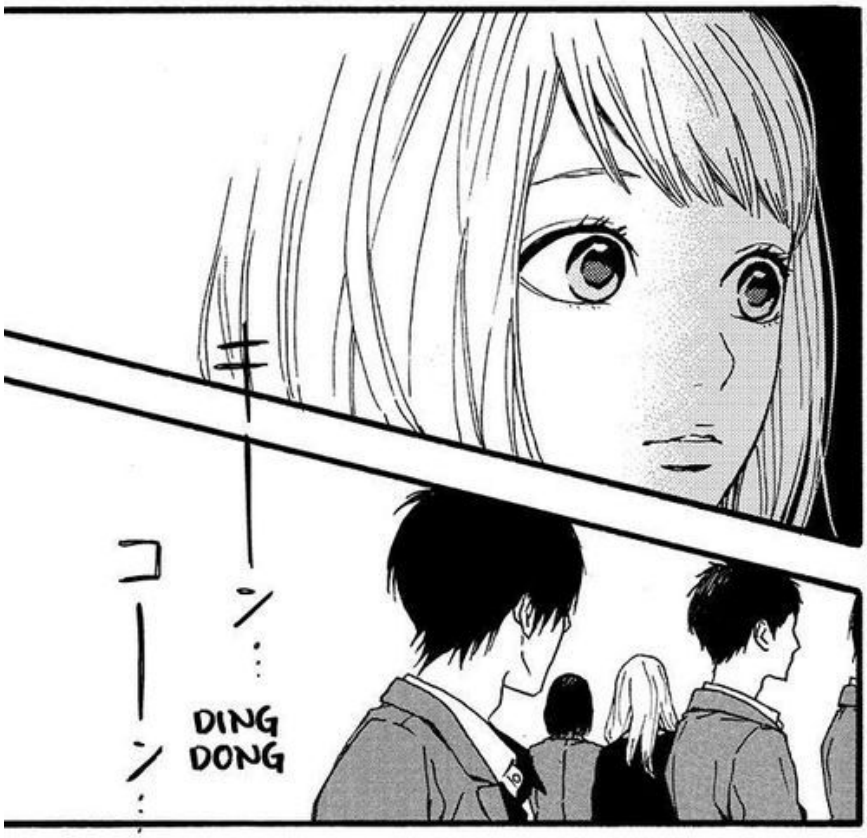
WHERE'D YOU GET THAT CHOCO-LATE?
KAKERU...

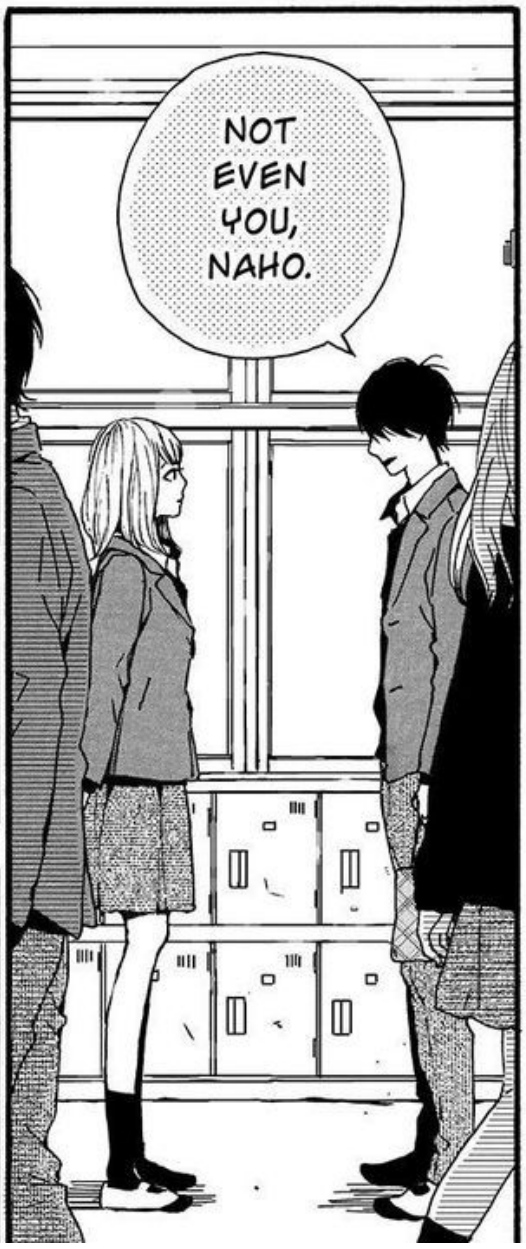
THIS?
HOW'D YOU KNOW IT WAS CHOCOLATE?
A FRESHMAN GIRL...
...JUST GAVE IT TO ME.
I DIDN'T KNOW HER...
...BUT SHE WAS CUTE.

FORGET HER!

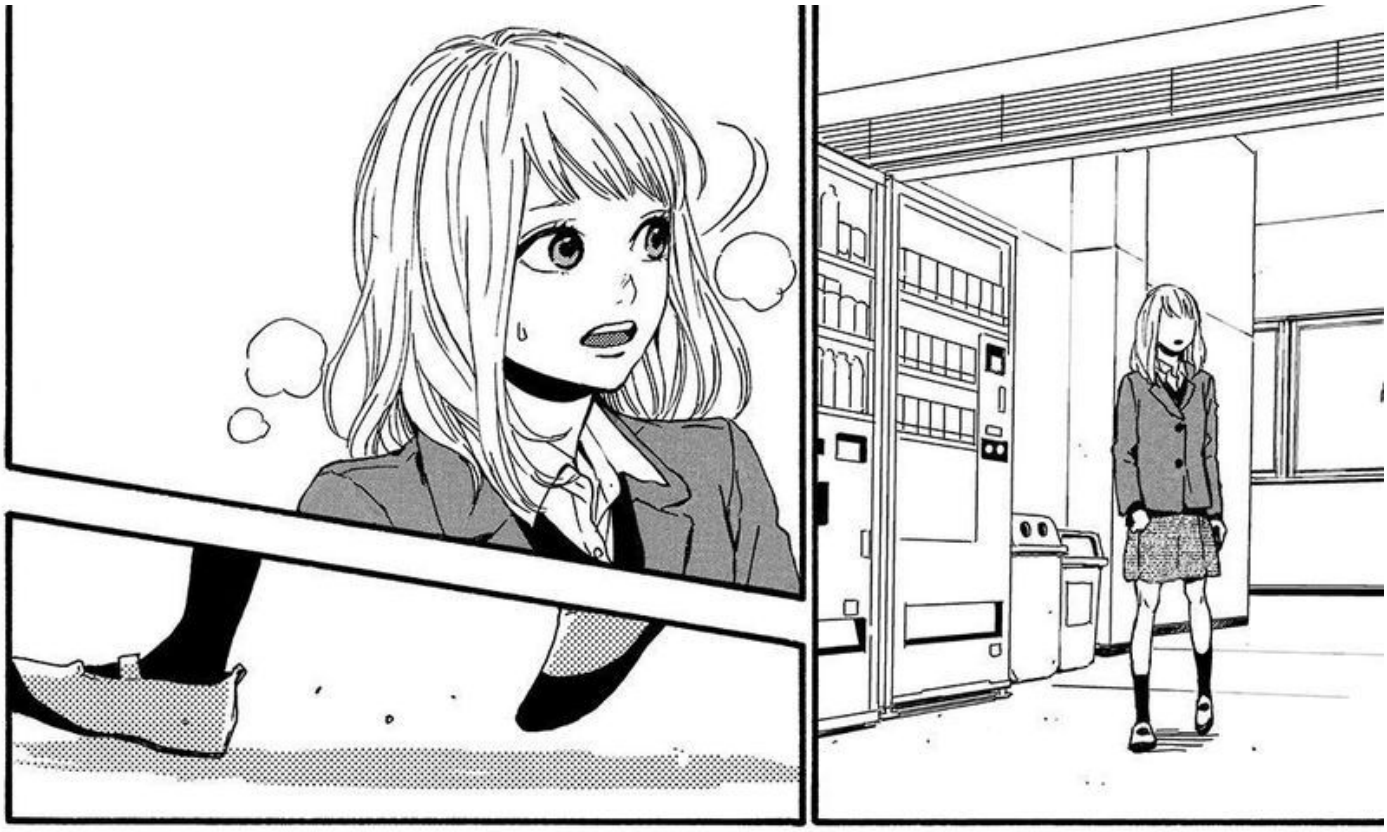
Ha ha!
DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT GONNA GO OUT WITH HER.







THE THIRD TIME WAS AFTER FIFTH PERIOD. KAKERU WAS BUYING A DRINK FROM A VENDING MACHINE.



THE FOURTH TIME WAS MY LAST CHANCE.

AFTER SCHOOL, KAKERU TOLD ME, "GOOD LUCK GIVING IT TO HIM" AND THEN LEFT. I SHOULD HAVE STOPPED HIM THEN OR GONE AFTER HIM, BUT I WASN'T CAPABLE OF DOING THE SIMPLEST THING IN THE END.

BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW, I REALIZE HOW DIFFICULT THAT WAS FOR ME. IF I COULD DO IT OVER AGAIN, WOULD I SUCCEED IN GIVING KAKERU THE CHOCOLATE AND CONFESSING MY LOVE TO HIM?

DON'T PUT OFF WHAT YOU CAN'T DO TO "TOMORROW" OR "SOMEDAY." FOR KAKERU'S SAKE, DO ANYTHING YOU CAN DO.

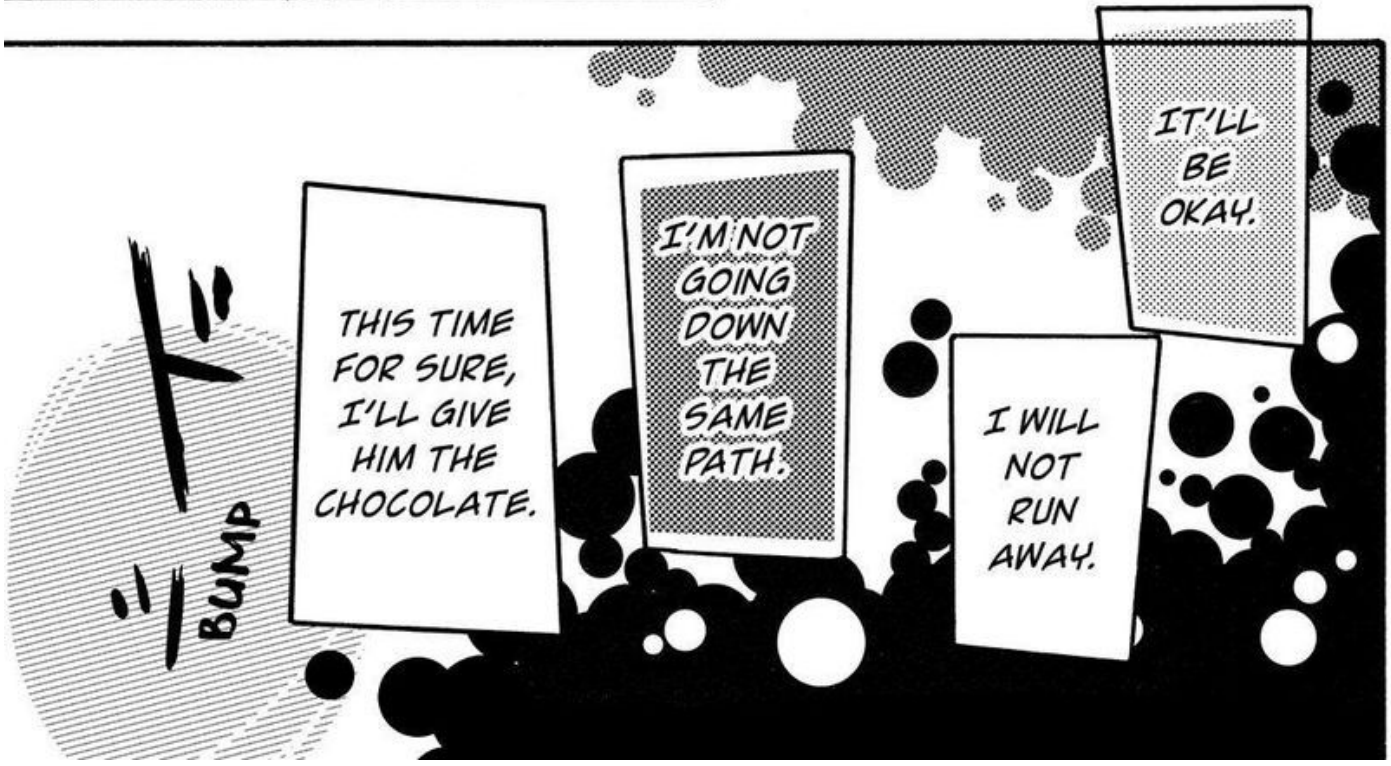
CHANGE THE FUTURE. GOOD LUCK.

ガタッ
RATTLE
KAKERU!
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR NARUSE, HE ALREADY LEFT.
...
TAP

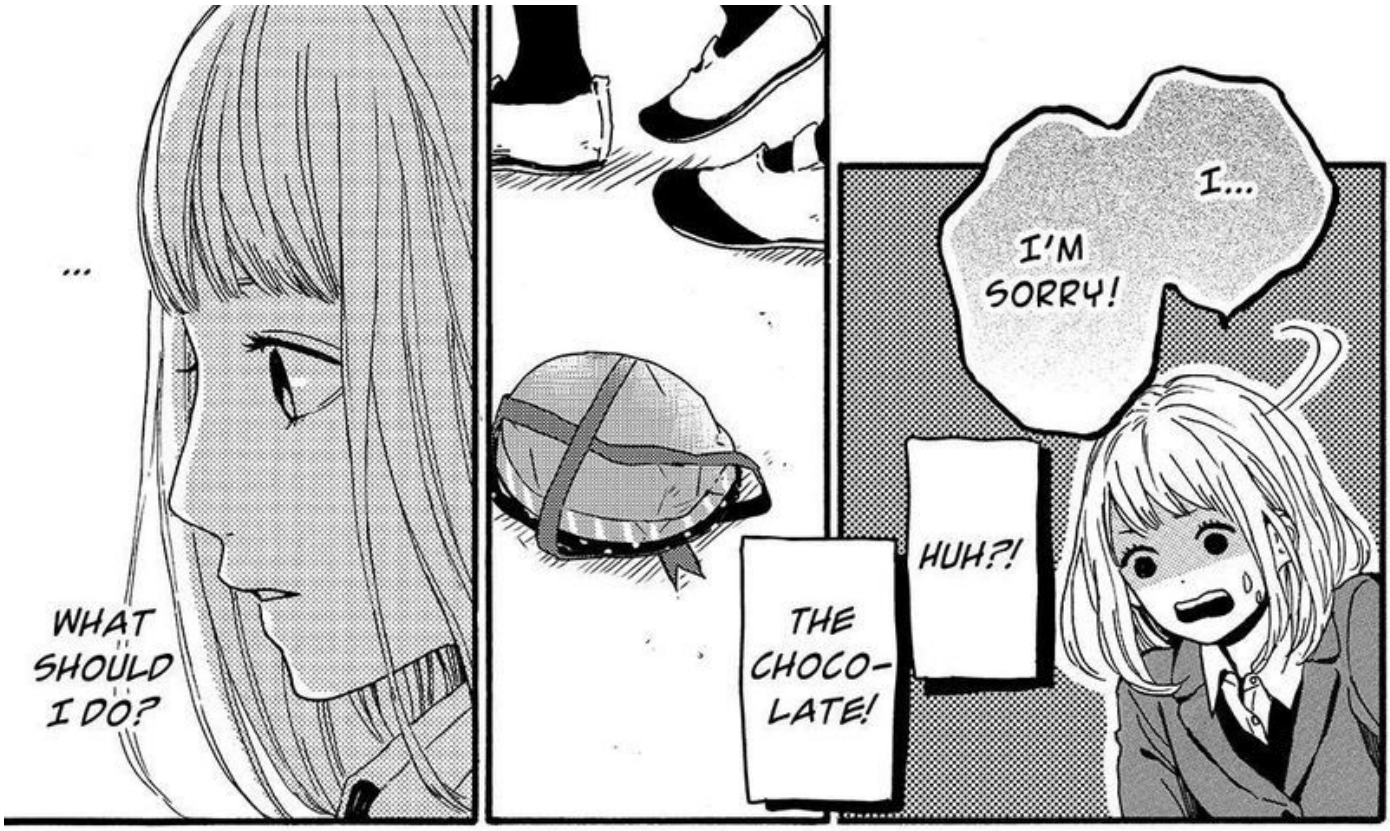
...YEAH!
SHOULD WE GO AFTER HIM, TOO?

...

IT'LL BE OKAY.


IT'LL BE OKAY.
I'M NOT GOING DOWN THE SAME PATH.
THIS TIME FOR SURE, I'LL GIVE HIM THE CHOCOLATE.
I WILL NOT RUN AWAY.
ド
BUMP

WHUMP
OW!
LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
UEDA-SENPAI!


...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
THE CHOCO-LATE!
HUH?!
I...
I'M SORRY!

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU WERE GONNA GIVE THAT TO...
...BUT I WOULDN'T NOW IF I WERE YOU.
TOO BAD.
YOU'RE NOT ME.
HUH?
CHUCKLE
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO BE? CHOCOLATE?
IT GOT STEPPED ON.

I'M GOING TO SEE KAKERU...
...SO PLEASE STEP ASIDE!
THE CHOCOLATE IS IMPORTANT.
I HAVE TO CHANGE THE FUTURE.
...
BORING.
Tch.

I JUST HAVE TO CHANGE IT.
ガチャ
CLACK
?

RUSTLE
There's something I want to give you, so don't go home yet.
KAKERU!!

I PROMISE I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU, THOUGH.
...BUT I'M SORRY. I DON'T HAVE IT RIGHT NOW.
HUFF
HUFF
THERE WAS SOMETHING I WANTED TO GIVE YOU...
...
SO... WILL YOU WAIT A LITTLE WHILE?
WELL, SEE YA.
I... DON'T NEED ANYTHING.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

WAIT.
I WANT TO TALK TO YOU, EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES.
I... DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANY REGRETS.
WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO KAKERU?
HOW CAN I GET HIM TO SMILE?
I'M THINKING, BUT I CAN'T COME UP WITH ANY ANSWERS.
ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT HIM TO KNOW.

...YEAH.
KAKERU...
YOU'VE BEEN AVOIDING ME... HAVEN'T YOU?
...WHY?
BECAUSE I HURT YOU...
...ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.
I GOT A FINAL TEXT FROM KAKERU ON FEBRUARY 15TH.

HE ASKED WHO I'D GIVEN THE CHOCOLATE TO, AND SAID HE FELT BAD ABOUT GETTING ANGRY AT ME ON NEW YEAR'S EVE. I REPLIED TO HIS TEXT, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF HE READ IT OR NOT.

IF WE'D SOLVED THE MIS-UNDER-STANDING, THEN...

WE SHOULD'VE TALKED ABOUT IT.

THAT WAS BOTHERING KAKERU ALL THIS TIME...

I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM WHAT WAS IN MY REPLY. FACE TO FACE. TELL HIM...

"I'M NOT HURT."

"I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONE WHO HURT YOU."

"I'M NOT HURT."

"...OR IF WE FIGHT. I JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOU, KAKERU."
"I DON'T CARE IF I GET HURT..."
"...IT'S HARD NOW, NOT BEING ABLE TO TALK LIKE WE USED TO."
"BUT..."
"I'M SORRY. IT'S MY FAULT."
"I'M SORRY, KAKERU."

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, NAHO.
I...
...WAS WEAK...
...SO I KEPT RUNNING AWAY.
I WAS SCARED...
...THAT IF I HURT YOU, YOU WOULD HATE ME.
AND I COULDN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF THAT...
...SO I DIDN'T WANT TO GET CLOSE.

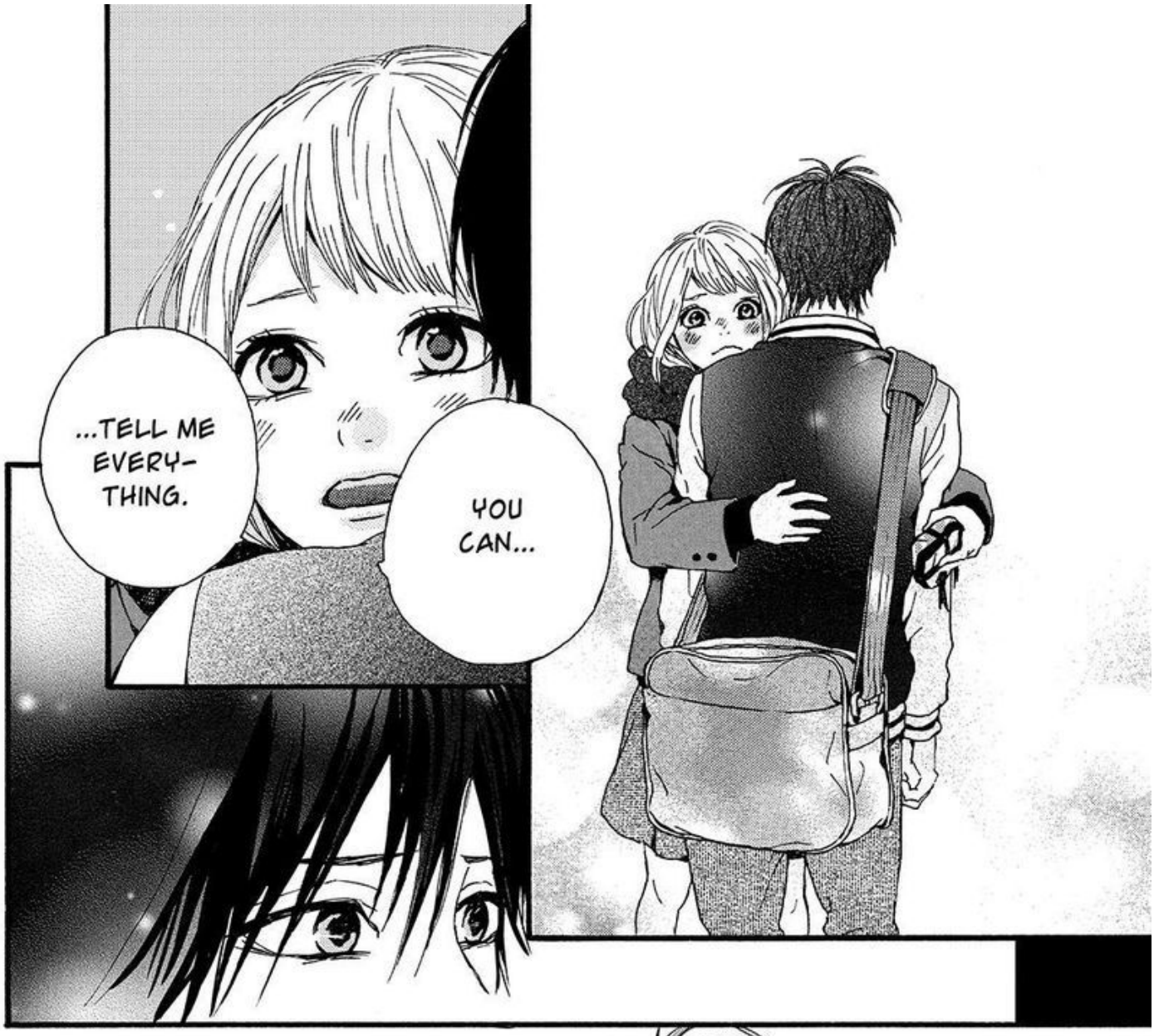
THE TRUTH IS, I DID WANT YOU TO GIVE ME CHOCOLATE.
I'M SORRY FOR ALWAYS LYING TO YOU.
WHEN YOU ASKED ME TO WALK HOME TOGETHER...
...I WAS THRILLED.
TO BE HONEST...
...I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, NAHO.
WHEN YOU KEPT TRYING TO TALK TO ME...
...AND SAID GOOD MORNING, IT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF MY DAY.
...ME, TOO.

KAKERU...
I'VE BEEN RUNNING AWAY...
...ALL THIS TIME.
I...
...W... W... WA...
...AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT WON'T MATCH UP AT ALL.
...FEARING THAT ITS CON-TENTS...
I MIGHT HAVE BEEN AFRAID TO LOOK AT THE LETTER EVEN MORE...
THE FUTURE HAS CHANGED A LOT.

FEARING A FUTURE THAT'S NOT WRITTEN IN THE LETTER...
I WANT TO...
...GO OUT WITH YOU...
...KAKERU.

BUT I WANT TO KNOW, A LOT MORE.
WHAT YOU ENJOY DOING, WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY...
I KNOW YOU...
...AND YET, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU.

I WANT TO BE CLOSE TO YOU SO I CAN ALWAYS HELP YOU, KAKERU.
I WANT TO KNOW ALL OF IT.
WHAT I CAN SAY THAT WOULD PLEASE YOU...
BUT...
...YOU ONCE SAID THAT IF I ASKED YOU OUT, YOU WOULD AGREE.
...I'M NOT GOING TO DATE ANYONE.
BUT I TOLD YOU...
BUT...
THAT'S OKAY. DON'T WORRY.
I MAY LIE AND RUN AWAY FROM YOU AGAIN.
NAHO, I CAN'T MAKE YOU HAPPY.
IF YOU'RE HAPPY, I'M HAPPY, KAKERU.


...TELL ME EVERY-THING.
YOU CAN...

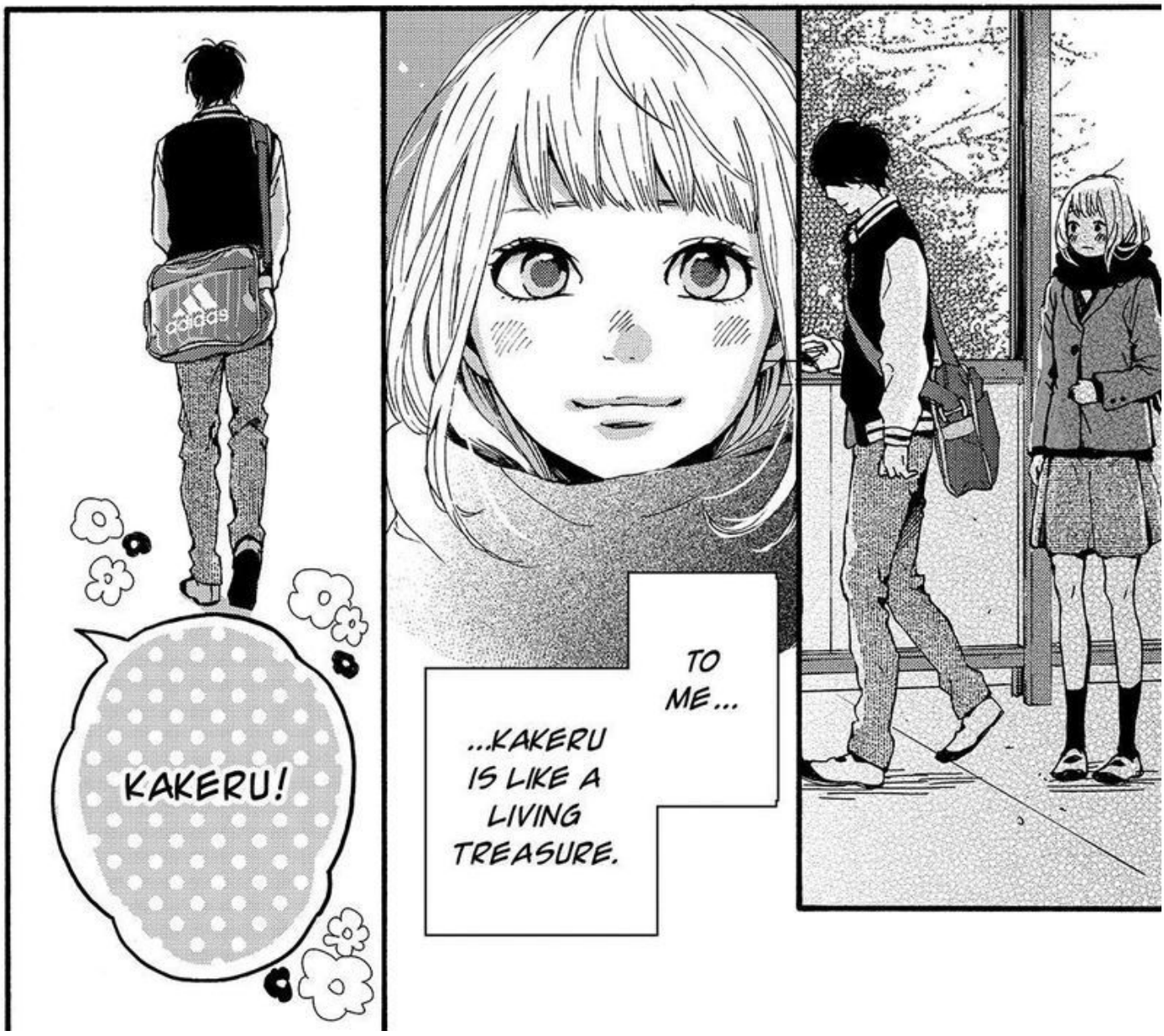
I HATE MYSELF.
I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF.
...IT'S SO HARD.

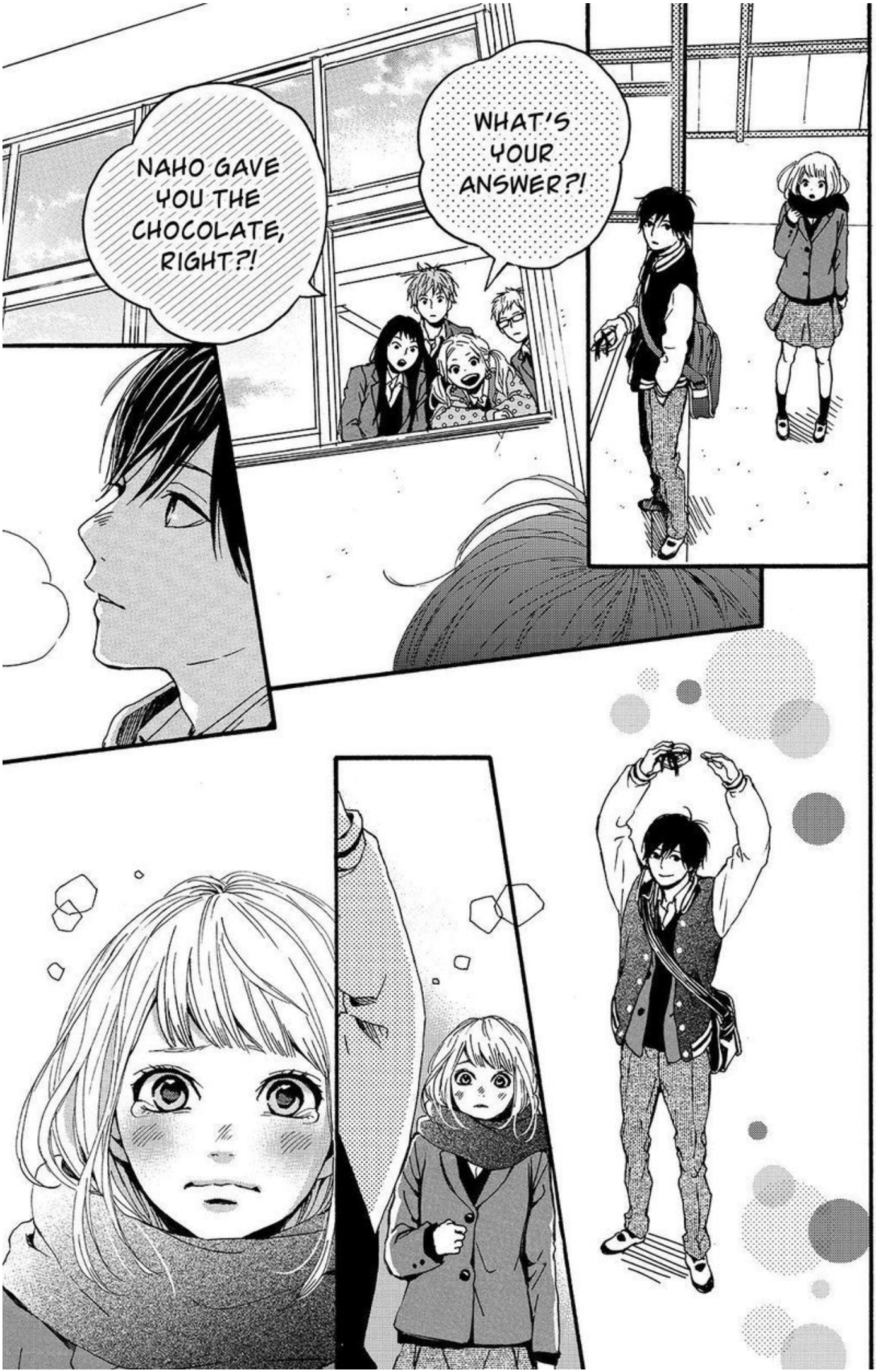
SOME-TIMES...
...I JUST WANT TO THROW IT ALL AWAY. YOU AND EVERYTHING ELSE, NAHO.
THAT'S WHEN I LOSE THE POINT OF LIVING.
BUT I KNOW I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS.
I WANT TO BE STRONG.
I WANT TO...
...BE HAPPY.
...YEAH.
LET'S DO IT.

AS LONG AS YOU LIVE...
...THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.
I'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY, KAKERU.
LET'S LIVE OUR LIVES TOGETHER.

...OKAY.
...THAT IF I GOT CLOSE TO KAKERU, HE WOULD DISAPPEAR.
I HAD A FEE-LING...
NAHO...
GIVE ME...
...YOUR CHOCO-LATE.
I THOUGHT IF I TOUCHED HIM, HE MIGHT BREAK.

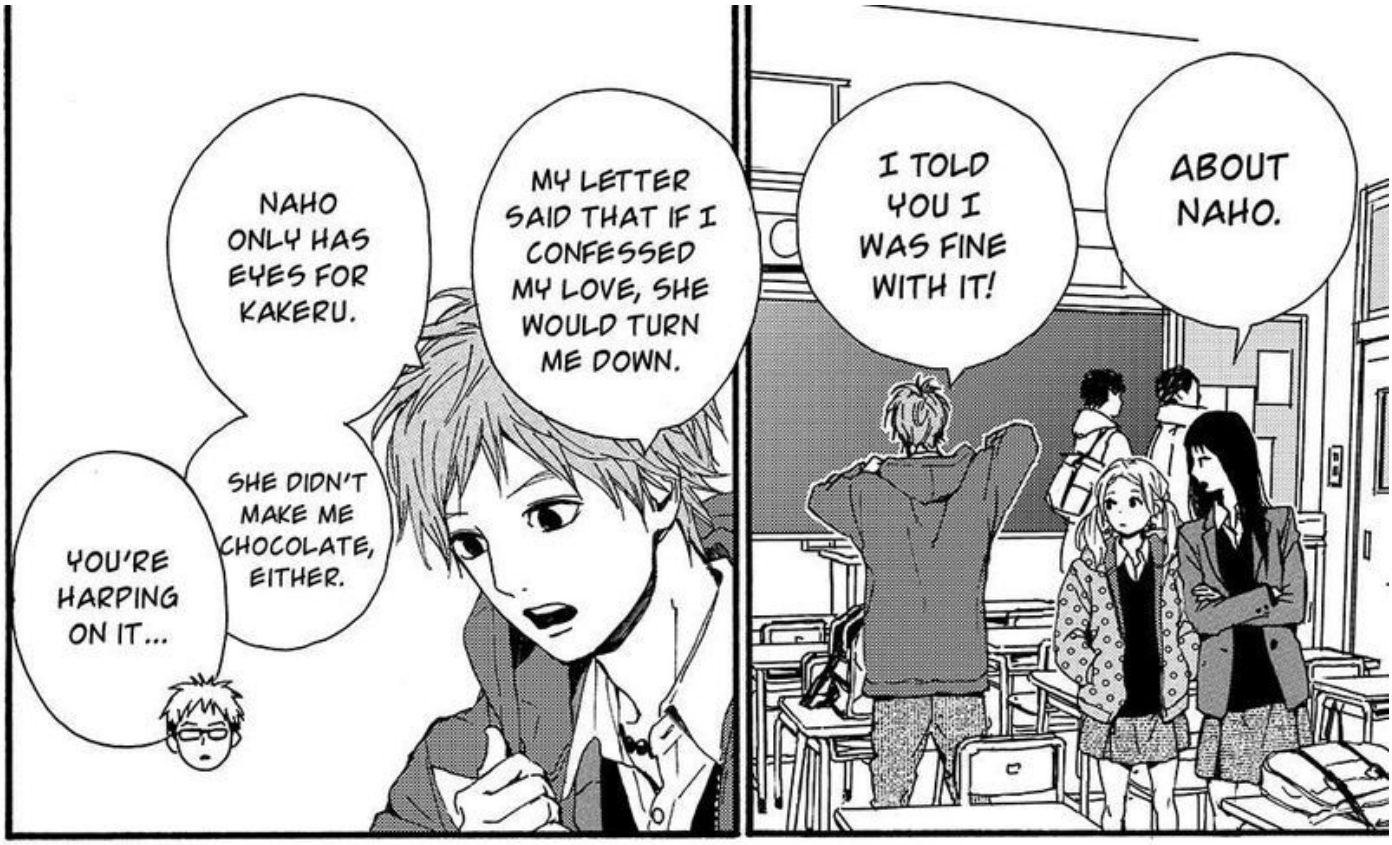
THE CHOCOLATE YOU'RE HOLDING BEHIND YOUR BACK.
BUT...
...IT'S CRUSHED.
I DON'T CARE.
THANK YOU.


TO ME...
...KAKERU IS LIKE A LIVING TREASURE.
KAKERU!


NAHO GAVE YOU THE CHOCOLATE, RIGHT?!
WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?!

CONGRATU-
LATIONS!

MAY KAKERU'S TOMORROW...
...BE CHANGED.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

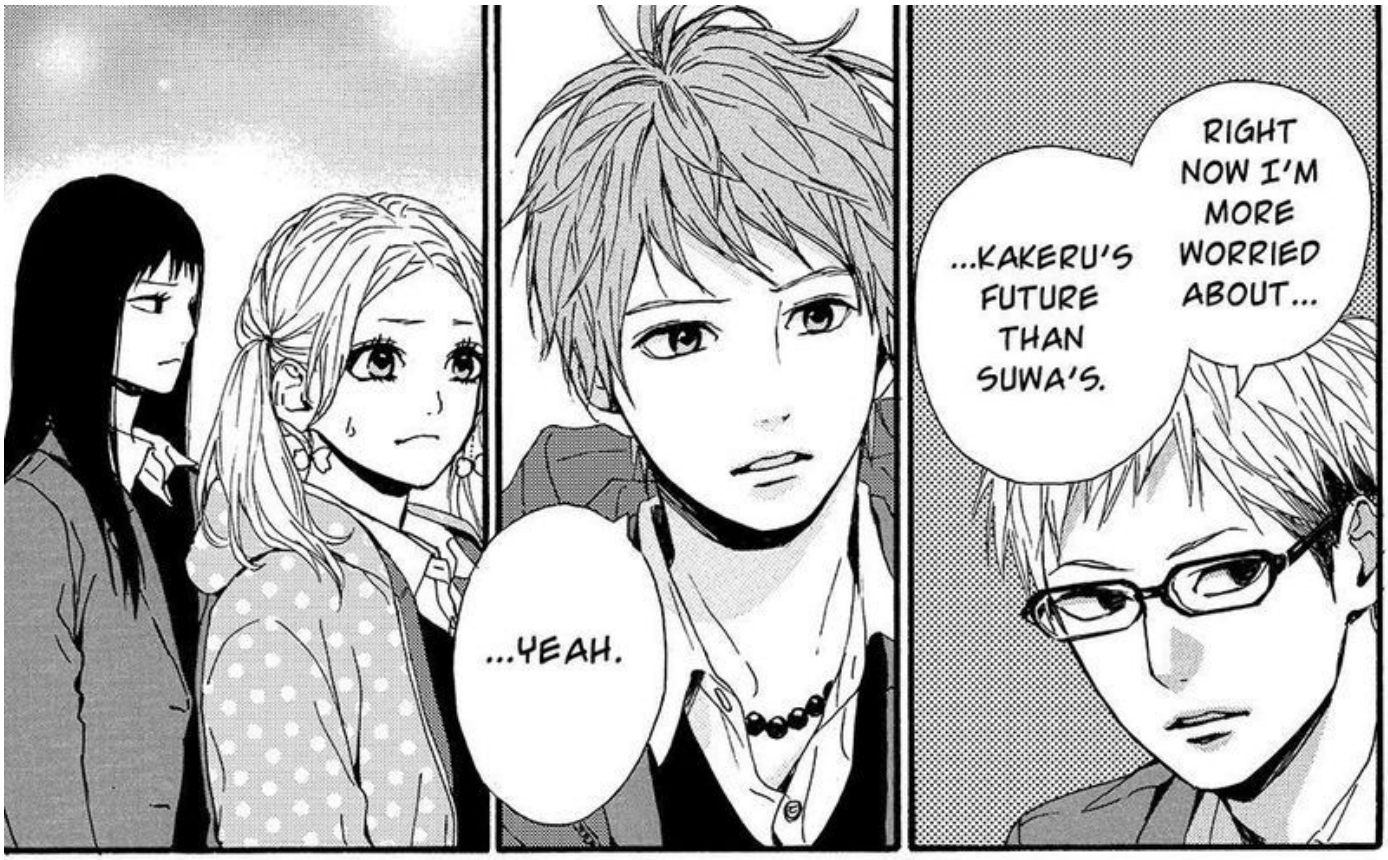

NAHO ONLY HAS EYES FOR KAKERU.
MY LETTER SAID THAT IF I CONFESSED MY LOVE, SHE WOULD TURN ME DOWN.
SHE DIDN'T MAKE ME CHOCOLATE, EITHER.
YOU'RE HARPING ON IT...
I TOLD YOU I WAS FINE WITH IT!
ABOUT NAHO.

THIS WORLD IS FOR KAKERU TO BE HAPPY.
MOST OF ALL, MY FUTURE SELF IS ALREADY LIVING THE DREAM.
I'M FINE WITH HOW IT'S WORKED OUT HERE.

BESIDES, I'VE GOT ONE OTHER DREAM THAT I'M GOING TO MAKE COME TRUE!
OH?

SO DON'T TELL NAHO OR KAKERU ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
YES!!
Like about being married!
YEAH, YEAH.
That's a secret for life!!

WELL... NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WERE SO STUBBORN ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, SUWA.
IT WAS FOR KAKERU'S SAKE, WASN'T IT?



...TO SAVE KAKERU.

OUR FUTURE SELVES, TEN YEARS FROM NOW, CREATED THIS WORLD...

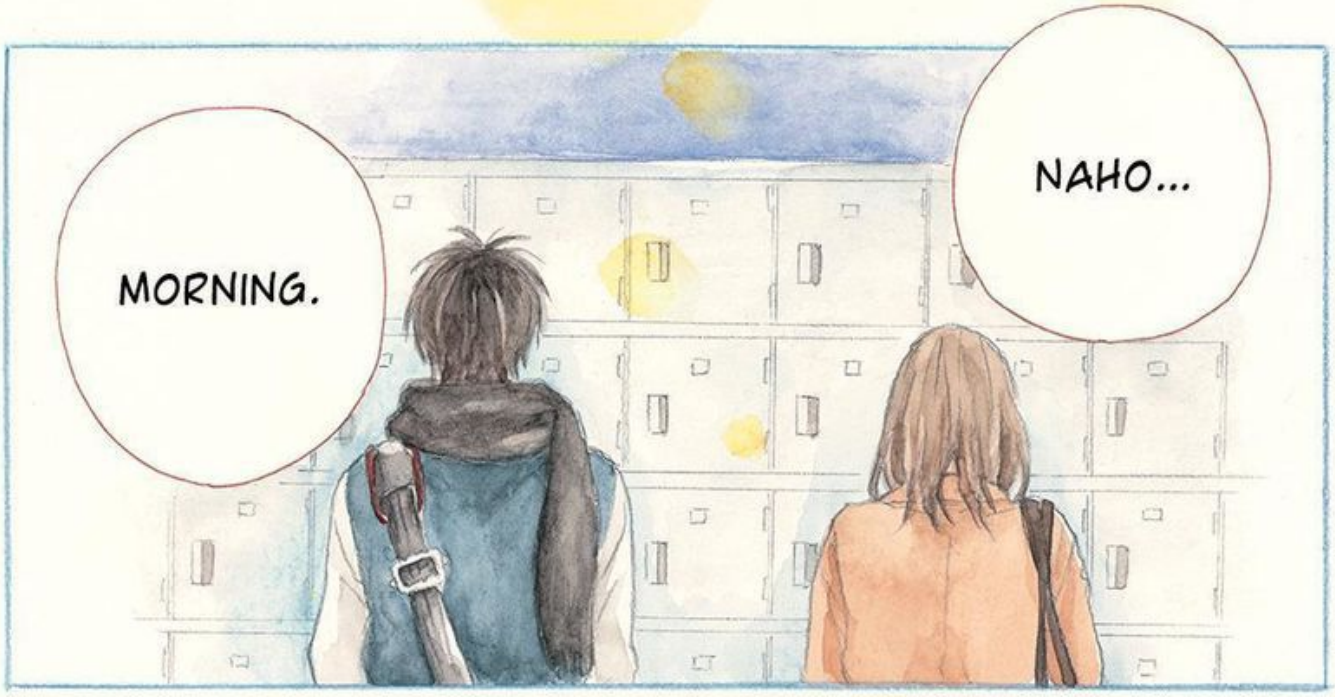
...MUST BE A NEW ONE, AN OFFSHOOT CREATED WHEN THE LETTERS WERE DELIVERED.

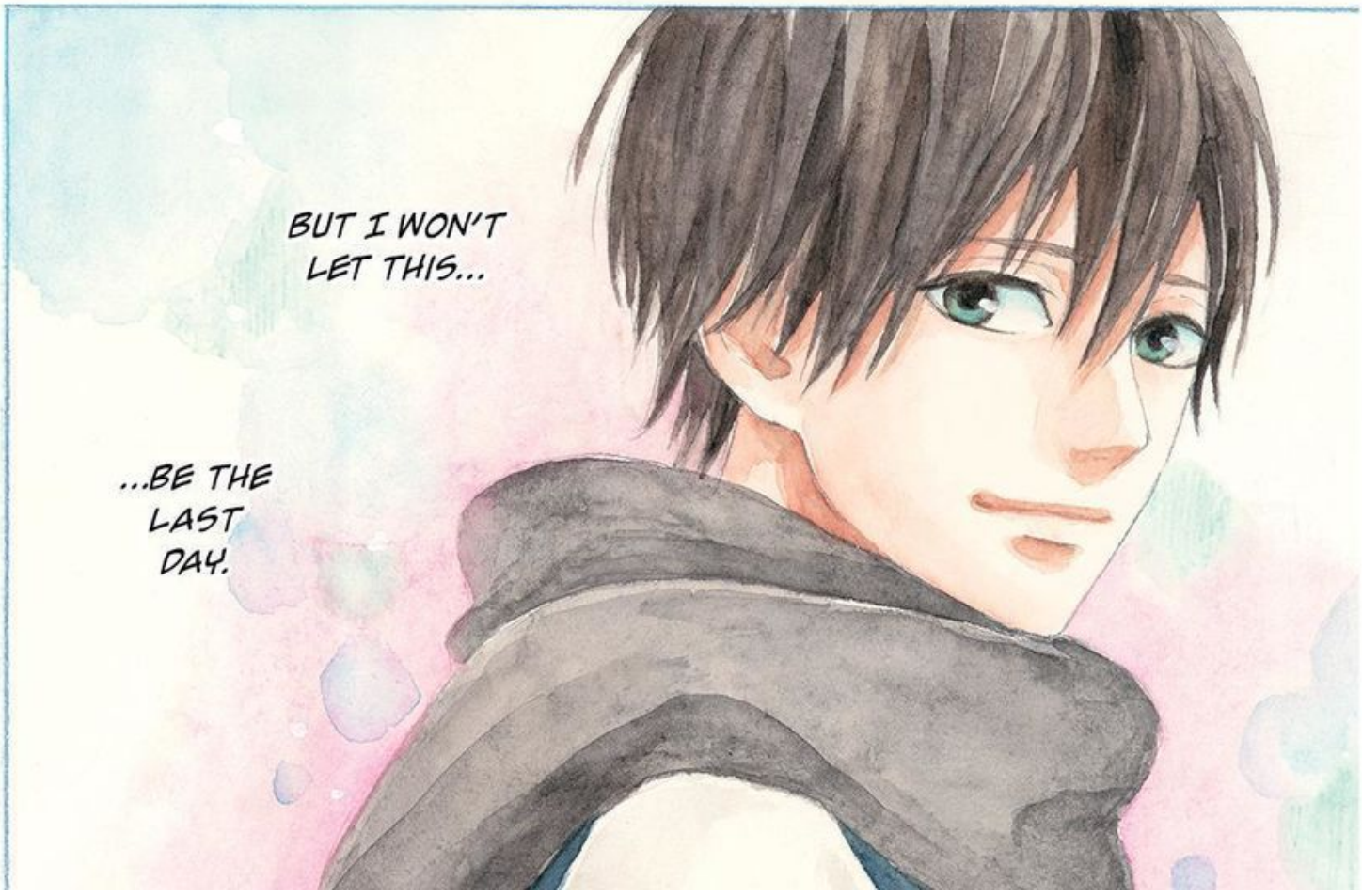
THIS WORLD...

...SHE WOULD SEE KAKERU.

...HAD NO IDEA THIS WOULD BE THE LAST DAY...

MY FUTURE SELF, TEN YEARS FROM NOW, WHO SENT ME THE LETTER...



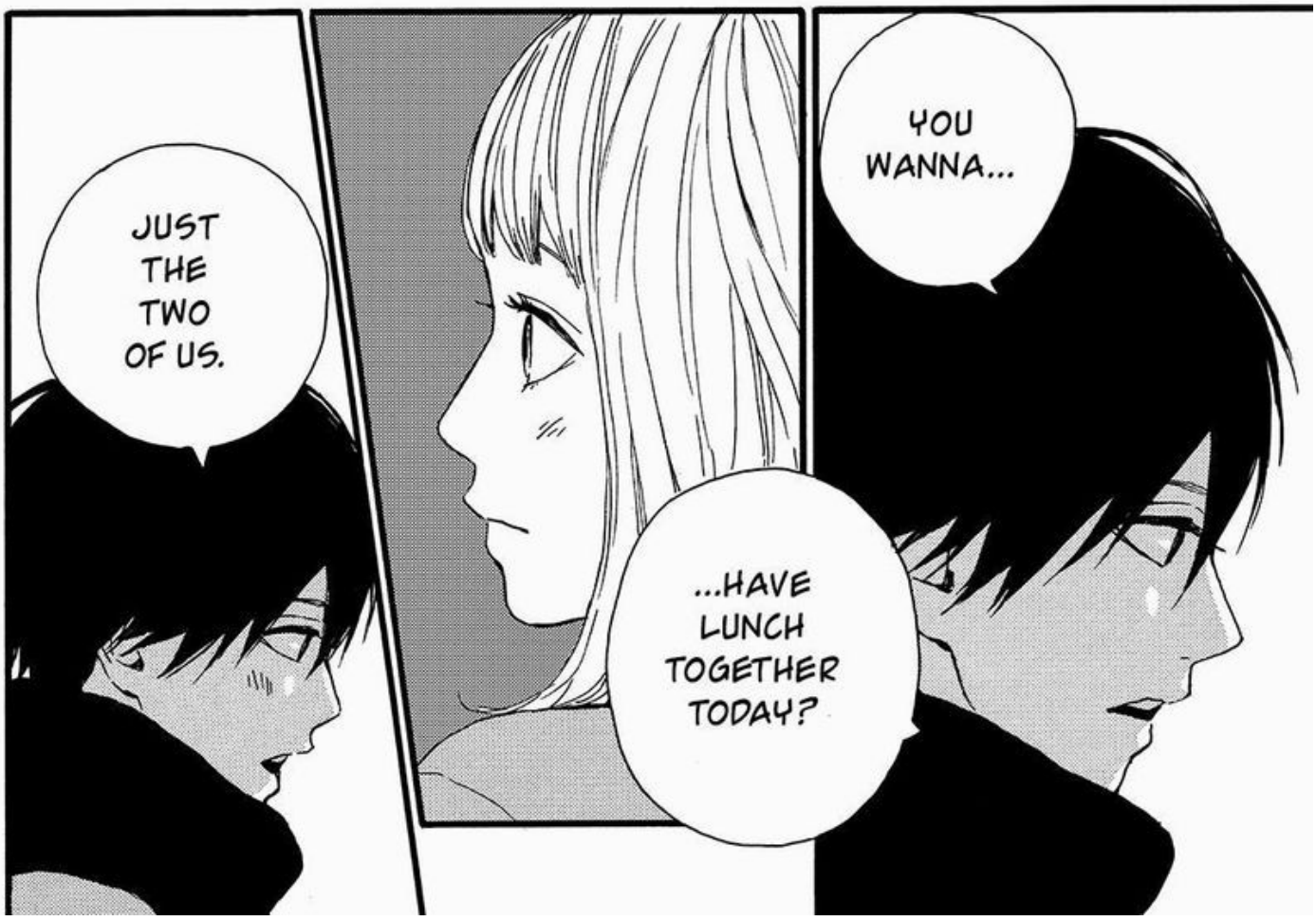


IN THE SPRING OF MY 16TH YEAR...
...I RECEIVED A LETTER.

THE FINAL CHAPTER
HOW DID THIS GET DELIVERED?
WHY DID IT COME TO ME...?

FEBRUARY 15TH
IN THE MORNING, I MET KAKERU
BY THE ENTRANCE.
HE SAID, "ISN'T IT COLD?"
I REPLIED, "YEAH, REALLY."

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I TALKED TO KAKERU.



SURE!

KAKERU.
YOU CAN HAVE THESE.

I HAVE TO MAKE SURE WHAT'S WRITTEN IN THE LETTER FOR TODAY...
...DOESN'T HAPPEN.

I USED THOSE WHEN I WAS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
I FIGURE YOU'LL LOOK GOOD IN THEM.
I have good eyes.
HUH?
GLASSES?

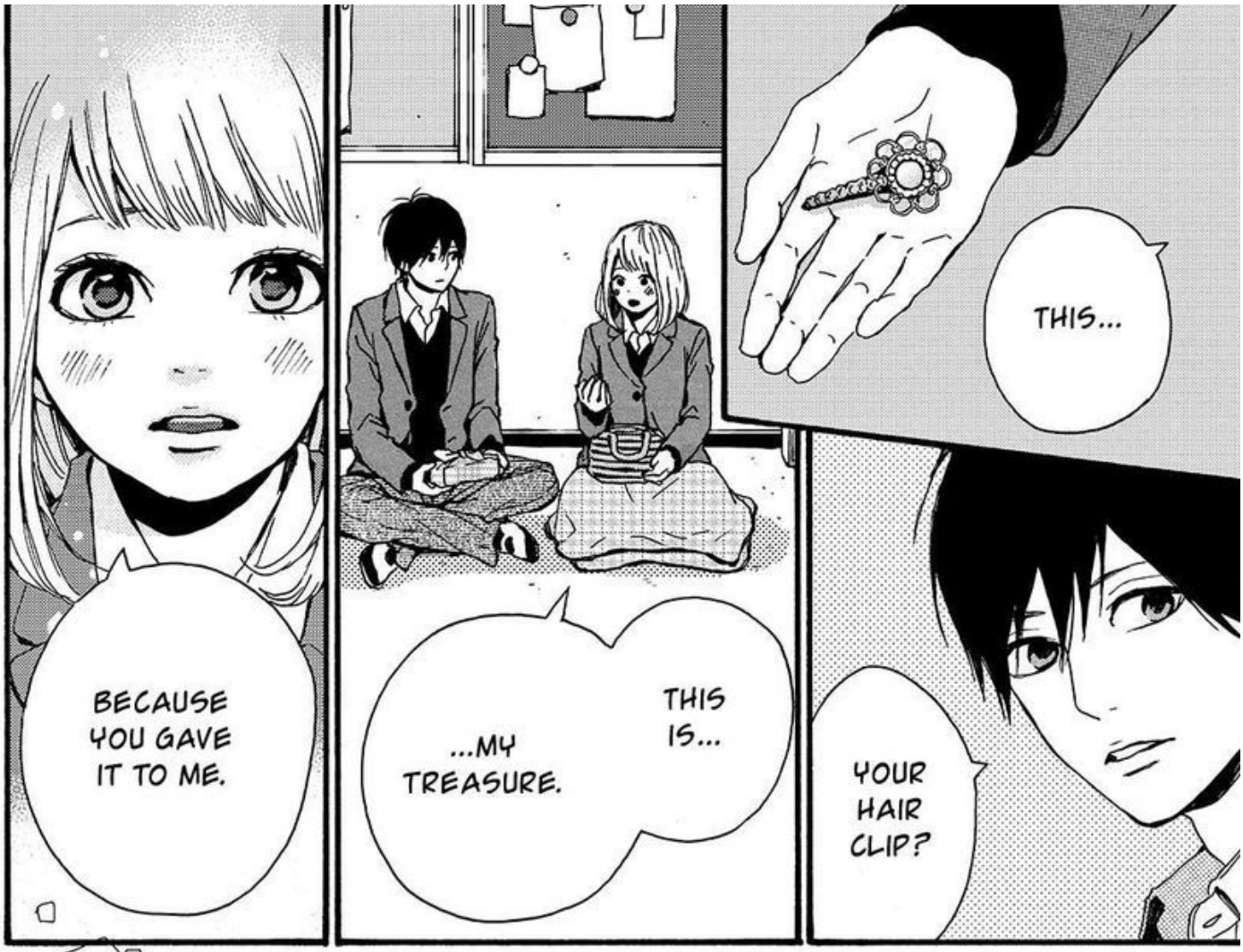
REALLY, I DON'T NEED THEM.
OH, BUT THEY SLIP DOWN YOUR NOSE THE LONGER YOU WEAR THEM.

I can't see out of these...
KAKERU!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY PASSES!
LET'S AIM TO JOIN A PROFESSIONAL TEAM!
Bros to pros!
THIS IS COMING OUT OF THE BLUE...
ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH! YOU ALREADY TOLD ME THAT.
THE SHOTS YOU MADE AT THIS MORNING'S PRACTICE WERE AWESOME!
WHERE'D YOU GET ALL THOSE SNACKS FROM?
AZU AND TAKAKO.
THEY TOLD ME TO EAT 'EM WITH YOU.
FUUUMP
POTATO SNACKS
EVEN THOUGH WE ALL AGREED BEFORE-HAND TO ACT NORMALLY...
...I GUESS IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR US.

...SOME-THING TO GIVE YOU, TOO.
UM... I HAVE...
EVERYONE'S ACTING KIND OF WEIRD.
HEE HEE

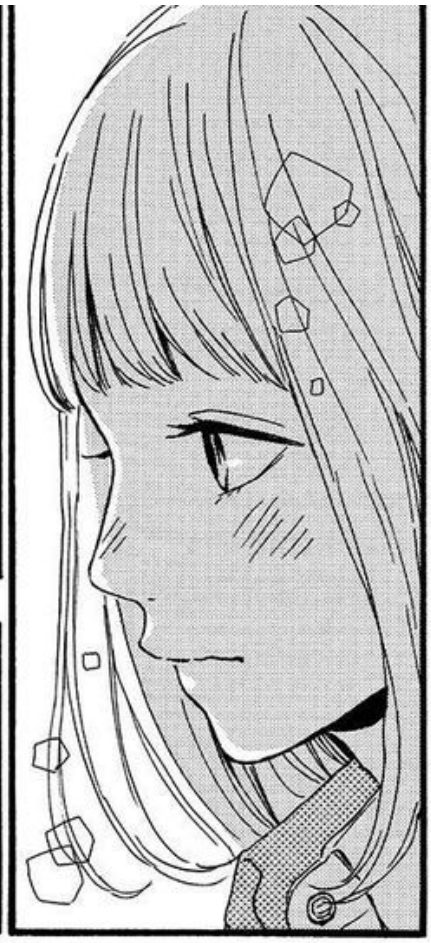
REALLY?!
I PUT IN YOUR FAVORITE MASHED POTATOES, TOO.
WHOA!
I HAVEN'T HAD A NAHO BENTO IN A LONG TIME!

ACTUALLY...
...KAKERU...
THANK YOU!


THIS...
YOUR HAIR CLIP?
THIS IS...
...MY TREASURE.
BECAUSE YOU GAVE IT TO ME.

IF I'D BOUGHT IT FOR MYSELF...
...IT WOULDN'T BE A TREASURE.
EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME IS A TREASURE, KAKERU.
BUT YOU'RE FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAN ANY TREASURE.

YOU WERE THE COOLEST ONE THERE!
REMEMBER AT THE ATHLETIC FESTIVAL, THE EVENT WHERE YOU PULLED DOWN THE POLE?
I ALSO FORGOT TO TELL YOU THIS.



HUH?
I KNOW YOU WERE EMBARRASSED, BUT YOU WERE COOL RUNNING AROUND HALF-NAKED, TOO!
Slender!

...NAHO.
AH...

COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVEN'T REALLY BEEN CLEAR ABOUT WITH YOU.
?

THANK YOU.
BUT I'M TOUCHED.

YOU'RE EMBAR-RASSING ME NOW...
Sorry...

I LOVE YOU.

LET'S EAT.
COME ON.

I'M JUST SO HAPPY...
NOTHING.
WHAT'S WRONG?

BUT SOMETIMES I GET ANXIOUS.

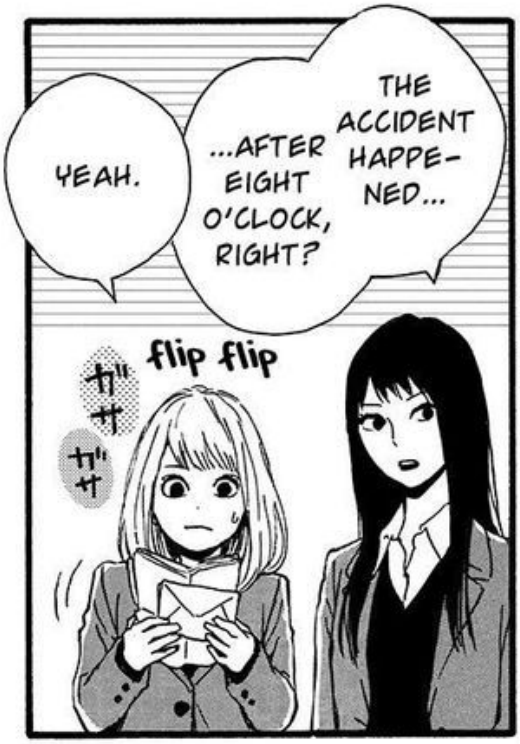
I'M AFRAID OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

I HAVE TO GO WITH MY GRAND-MA...
...TO THE HOSPITAL.

SORRY. TODAY DOESN'T WORK FOR ME.

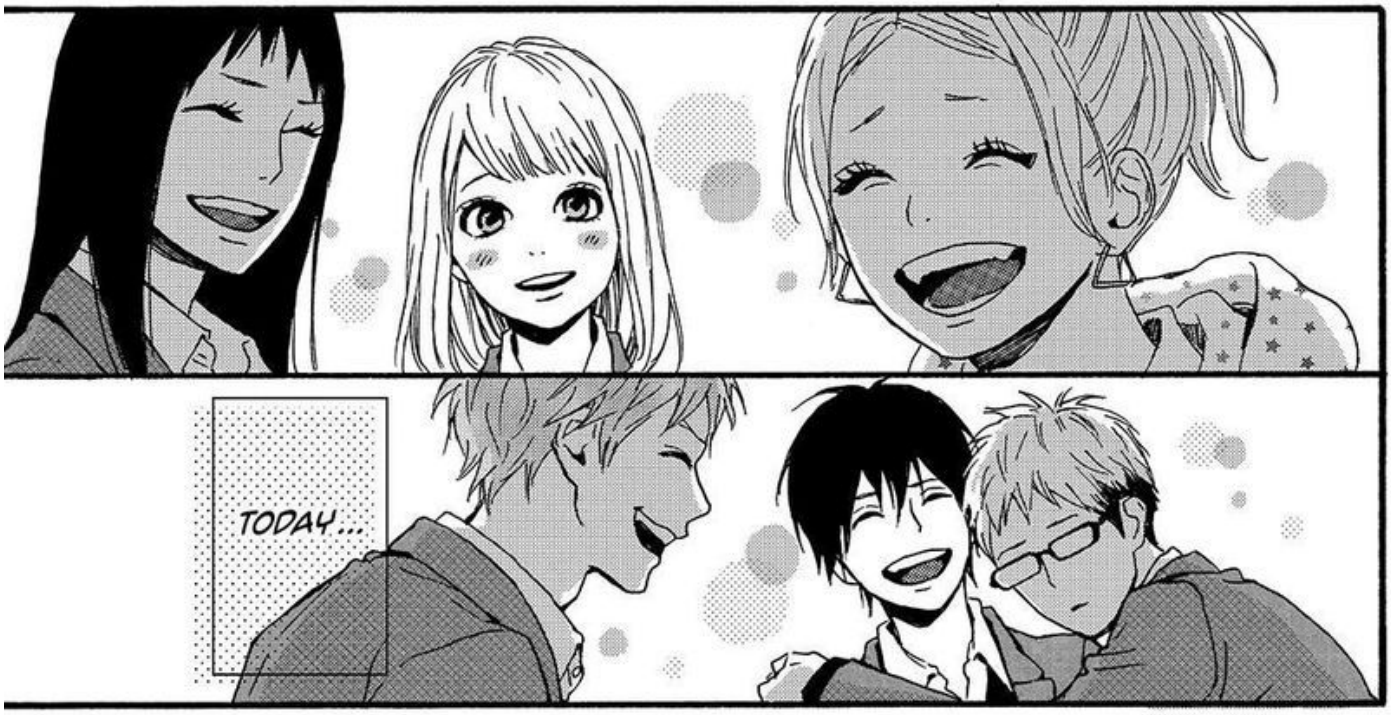
AZU TOLD ME TO INVITE YOU.
HMM...

...I SEE...


YEAH.
...AFTER EIGHT O'CLOCK, RIGHT?
THE ACCIDENT HAPPE-NED...
flip flip
カサ
カサ

WILL KAKERU BE OKAY ON HIS OWN?
NOT AFTER THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.
WE CAN'T PRESSURE HIM TO GO WITH US.

THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT AFTER 8:00. IT WAS AT AN INTERSECTION NEAR KAKERU'S HOUSE.
APPARENTLY, KAKERU RODE HIS BIKE RIGHT INTO THE PATH OF AN ONCOMING TRUCK.
!
YEAH... LET'S DO THAT!
THEN SHOULD WE WAIT AT THAT INTER-SECTION FOR KAKERU?
THAT'S MEAN!
LET'S DESTROY HIS BICYCLE.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YOU.
ザザ
RUSTLE
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?

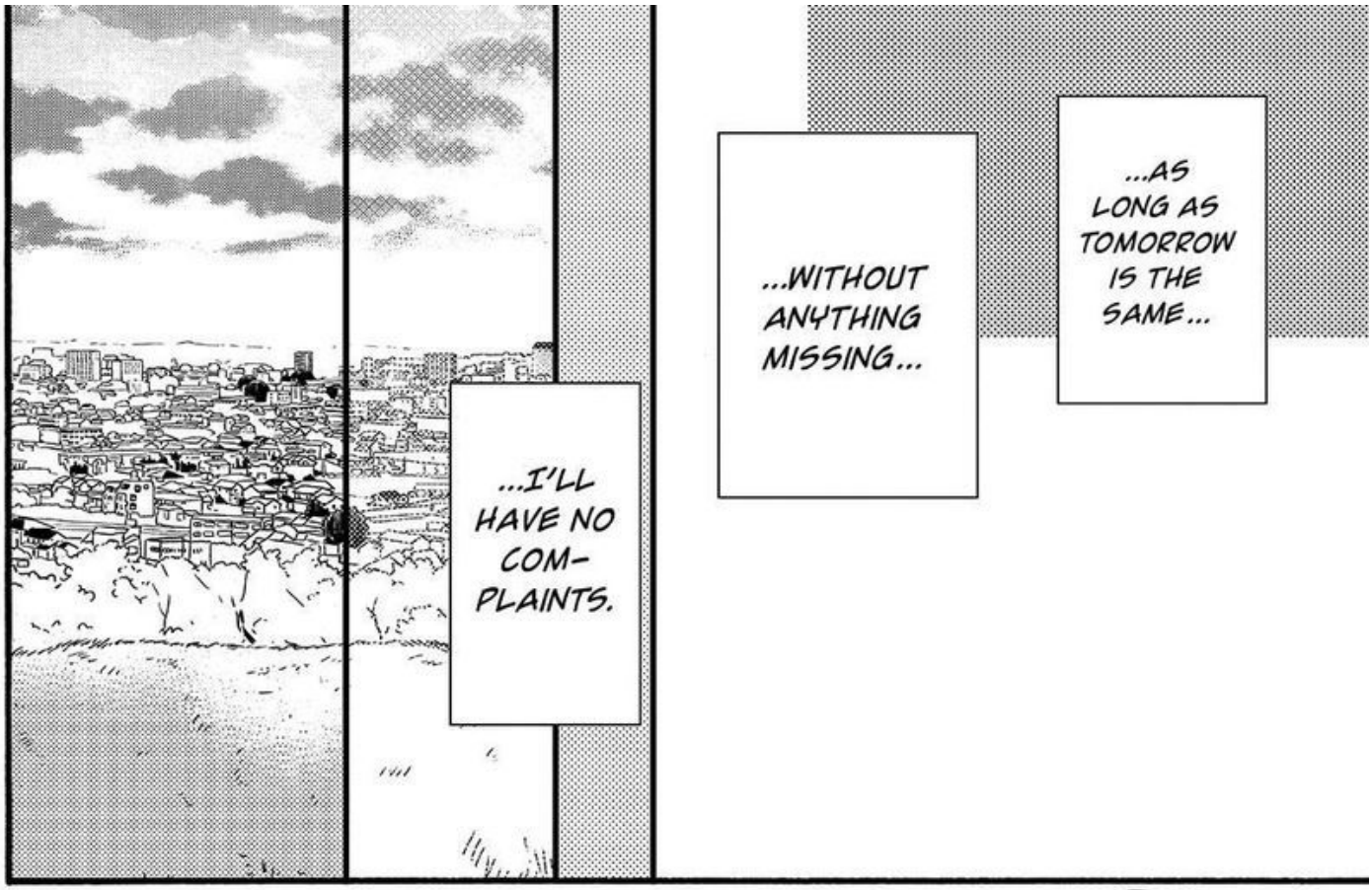


EVEN IF IT TURNS INTO A BORING DAY...

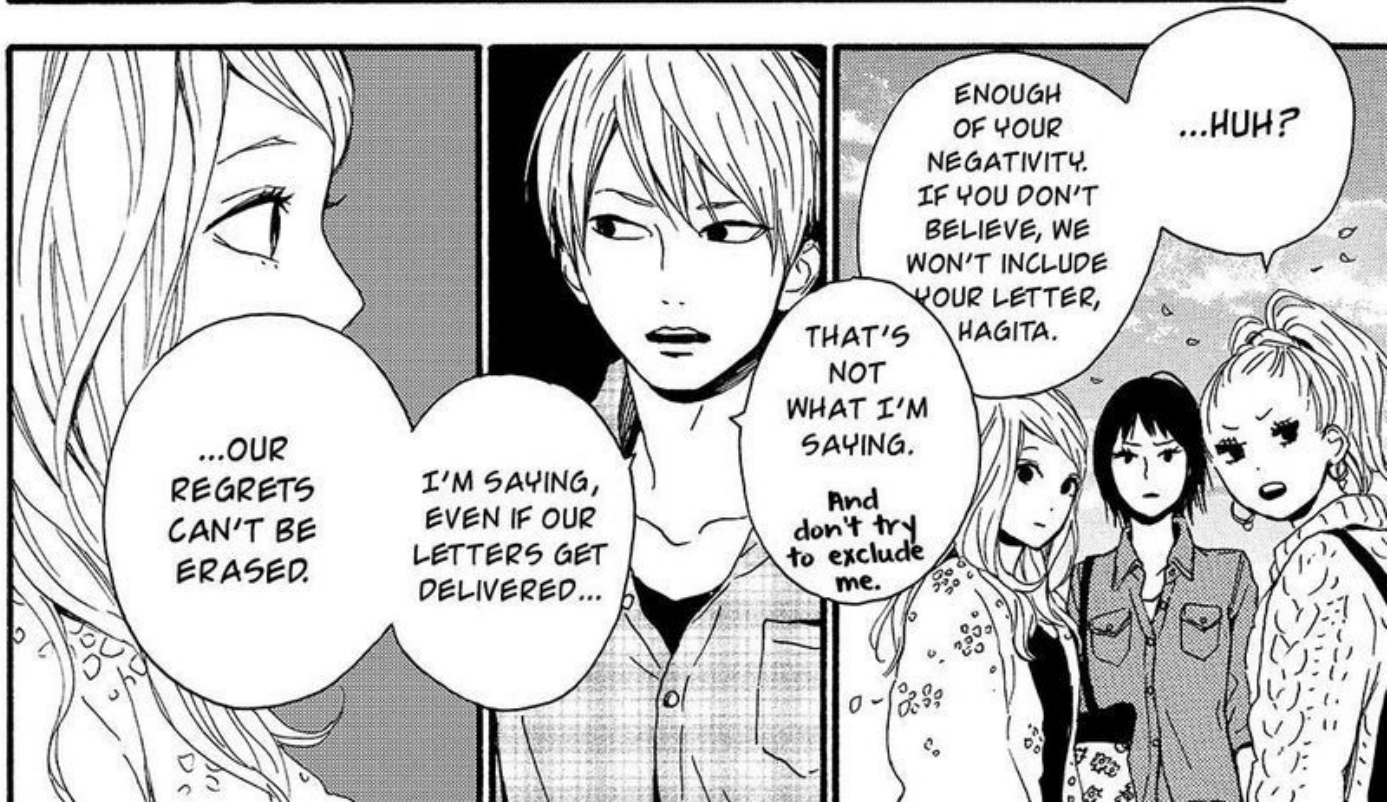
...AND NOTHING SPECIAL HAPPENS.

WE STUDY FOR SIX HOURS, TALK ABOUT NOTHING...

...NEEDS TO BE A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER DAY.

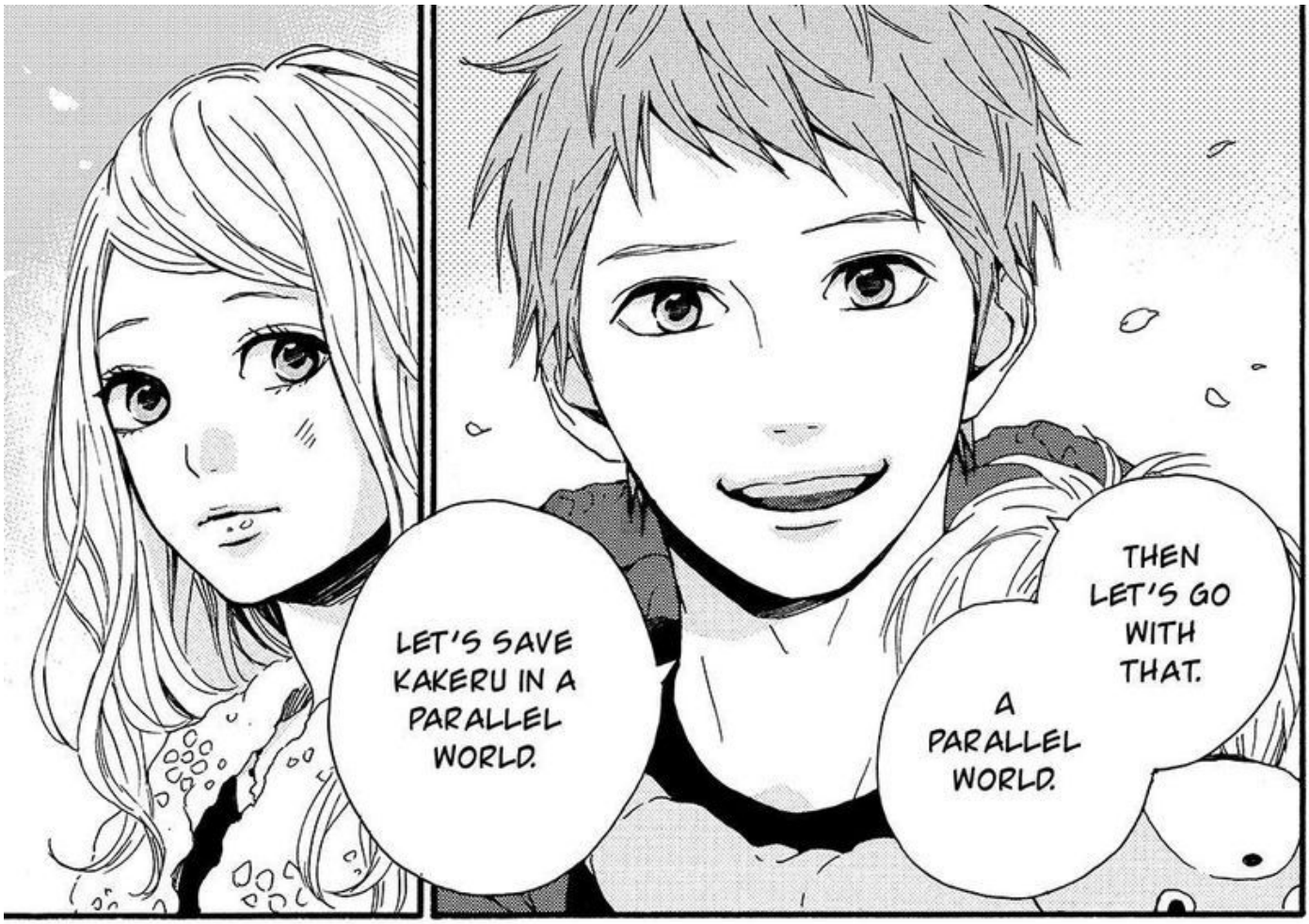

...I'LL HAVE NO COM-PLAINTS.
...WITHOUT ANYTHING MISSING...
...AS LONG AS TOMORROW IS THE SAME...

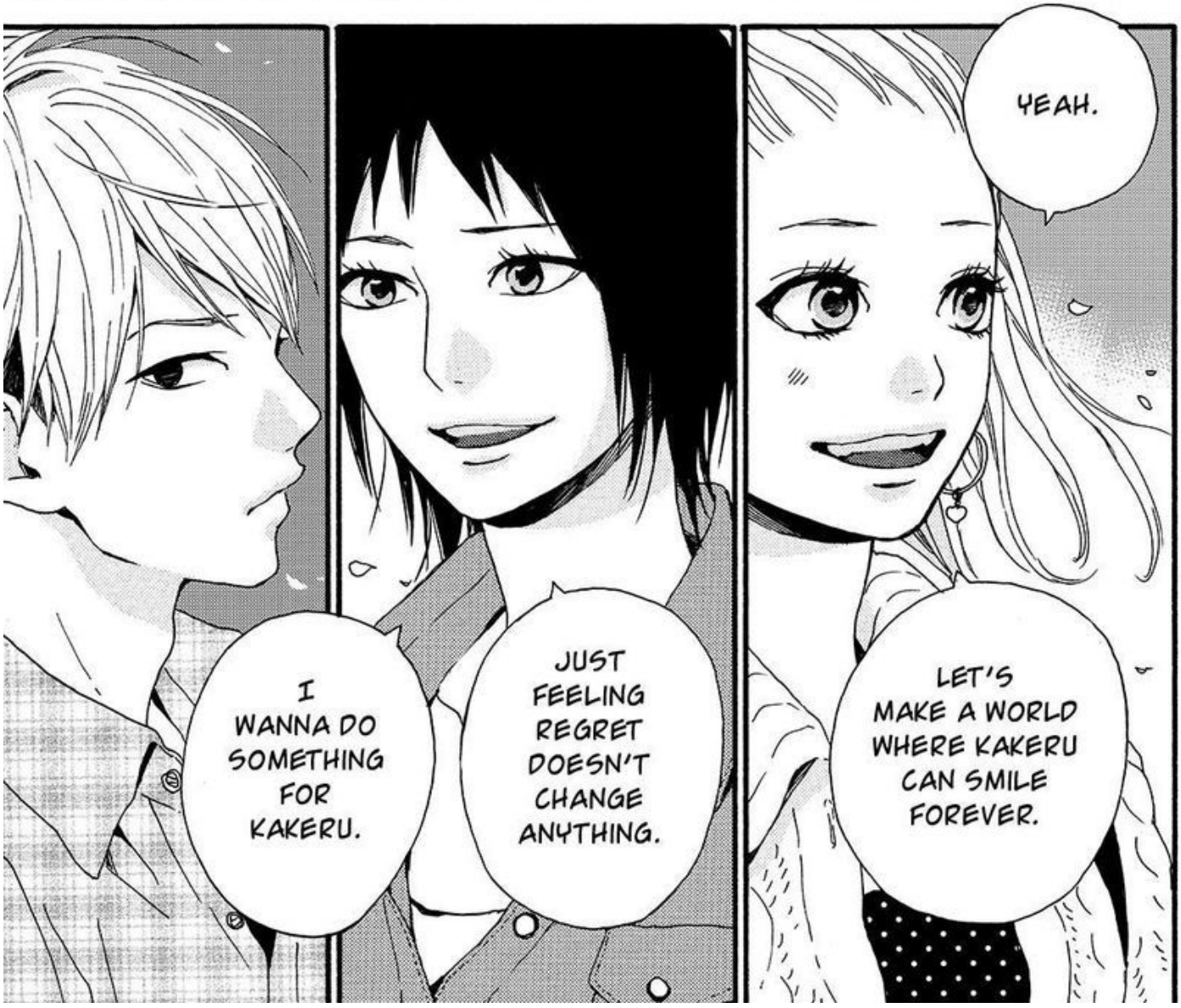
...CAN'T BE CHANGED.
THE PAST...

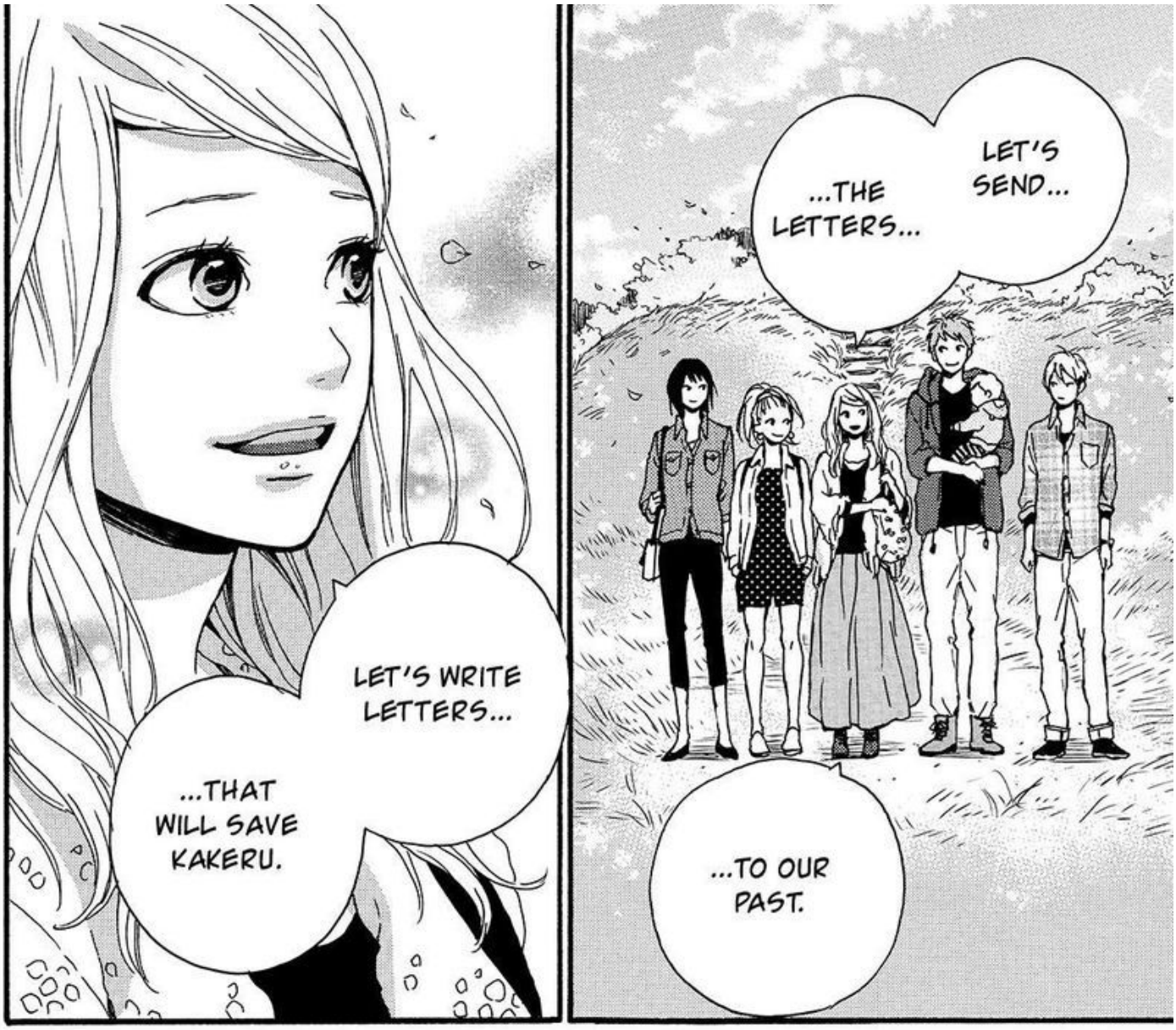

...OUR REGRETS CAN'T BE ERASED.
I'M SAYING, EVEN IF OUR LETTERS GET DELIVERED...
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING.
And don't try to exclude me.
ENOUGH OF YOUR NEGATIVITY. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE, WE WON'T INCLUDE YOUR LETTER, HAGITA.
...HUH?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ASSUME THERE ARE NO PARALLEL WORLDS AND THIS IS THE ONLY WORLD.
THE LETTERS REACH OUR PAST SELVES...
...WHO MANAGE TO SAVE KAKERU BECAUSE THEY'RE WARNED BEFOREHAND OF HIS DEATH...
...AND THE FUTURE IS PAINTED OVER AS THE "KAKERU DIED" EVENT DISAPPEARS.
...IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
IF THAT HAPPENED, THERE WOULD BE NO LETTERS TO WARN US OF KAKERU'S DEATH.
THE LETTERS WOULD CEASE TO EXIST THE MOMENT THE "KAKERU DOESN'T DIE" FUTURE COMES INTO BEING...
...AND THE PAINTED-OVER FUTURE WOULD PROBABLY RETURN TO ITS ORIGINAL FORM.

BUT IF THERE ARE PARALLEL WORLDS, A PARADOX WON'T BE FORMED, SO HE COULD BE SAVED, RIGHT?
YOU'RE SAYING KAKERU CAN'T BE SAVED BECAUSE IT WOULD FORM A PARADOX?
OR MAYBE THE LETTERS JUST CAN'T BE SENT BACK INTO THE PAST IN THE FIRST PLACE.
IF A PARALLEL WORLD IS INVOLVED...
...IT MAY BE POSSIBLE.
BUT IF OUR LETTERS GET DELIVERED, THEN THAT WORLD WILL SPLIT OFF...
...SO IT'S NOT LIKE WE'D BE CHANGING THE PAST OF OUR WORLD.
WHETHER THERE'S ONLY ONE WORLD OR PARALLEL WORLDS...
...WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE KAKERU AGAIN.


LET'S SAVE KAKERU IN A PARALLEL WORLD.
THEN LET'S GO WITH THAT.
A PARALLEL WORLD.


I WANNA DO SOMETHING FOR KAKERU.
JUST FEELING REGRET DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
YEAH.
LET'S MAKE A WORLD WHERE KAKERU CAN SMILE FOREVER.



BACK THEN...

THAT TIME... THAT MOMENT...

...IF I'D NOTICED WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME...

...MAYBE KAKERU WOULD BE HERE TODAY.

I'D WANT HIM TO BE THE HAPPIEST BOY IN THE WORLD.

...ALL KIND OF FUN EXPERIENCES.

I'D WANT HIM TO HAVE...

...ONE MORE TIME...

IF I COULD SEE KAKERU...

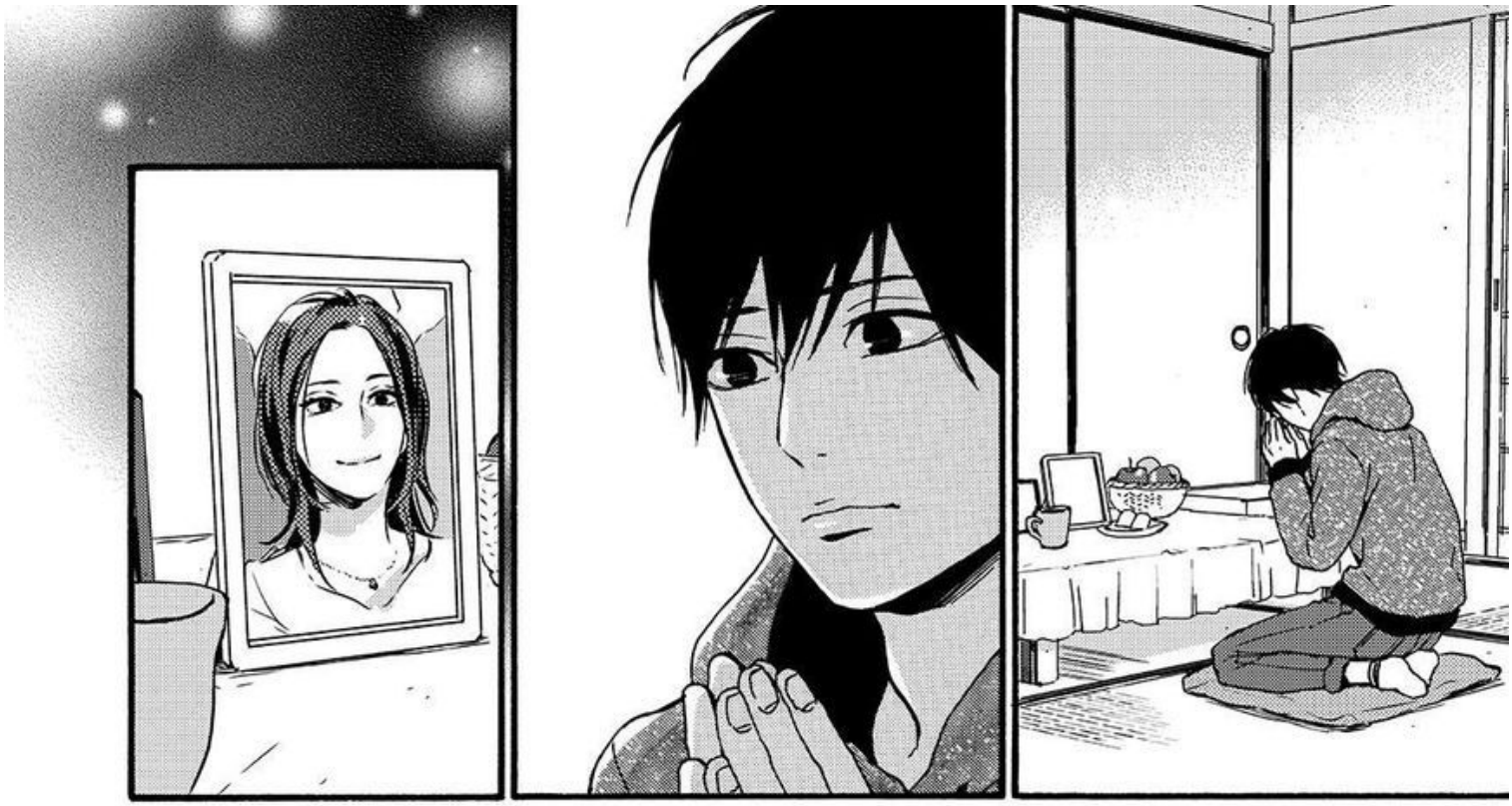
...WHEN HE WAS LITTLE.

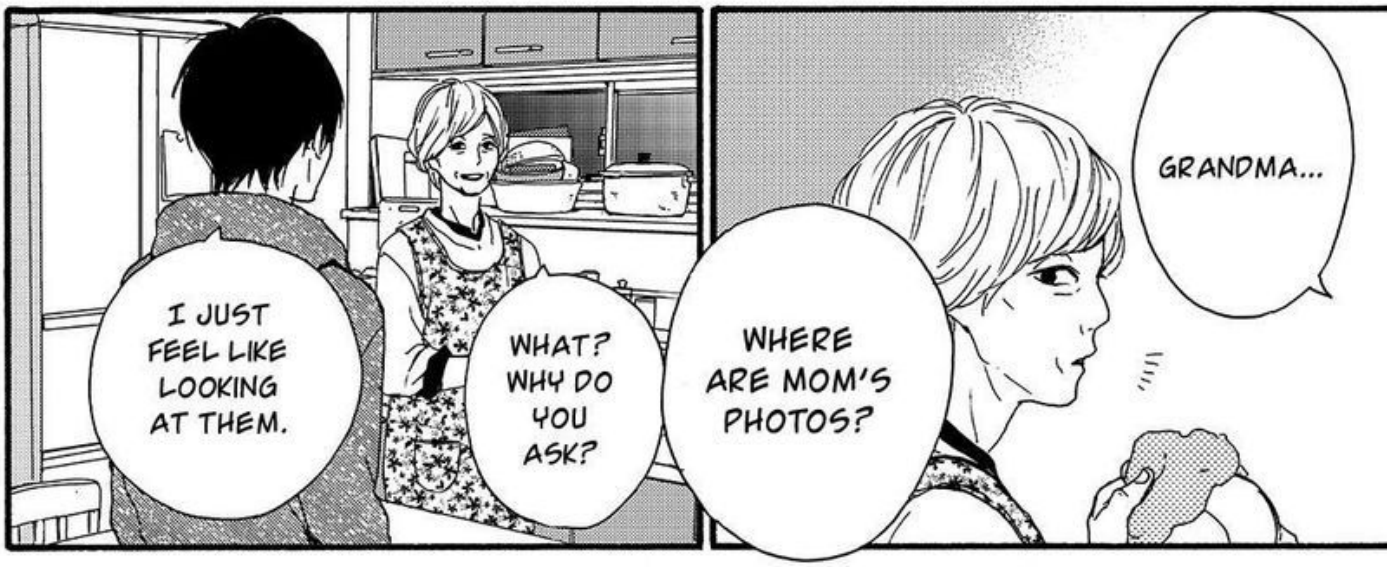
...I'D WANT TO MEET HIM...

...I WANT ONE MORE CHANCE TO SAVE KAKERU.

IF IT'S POSSIBLE...

TICK

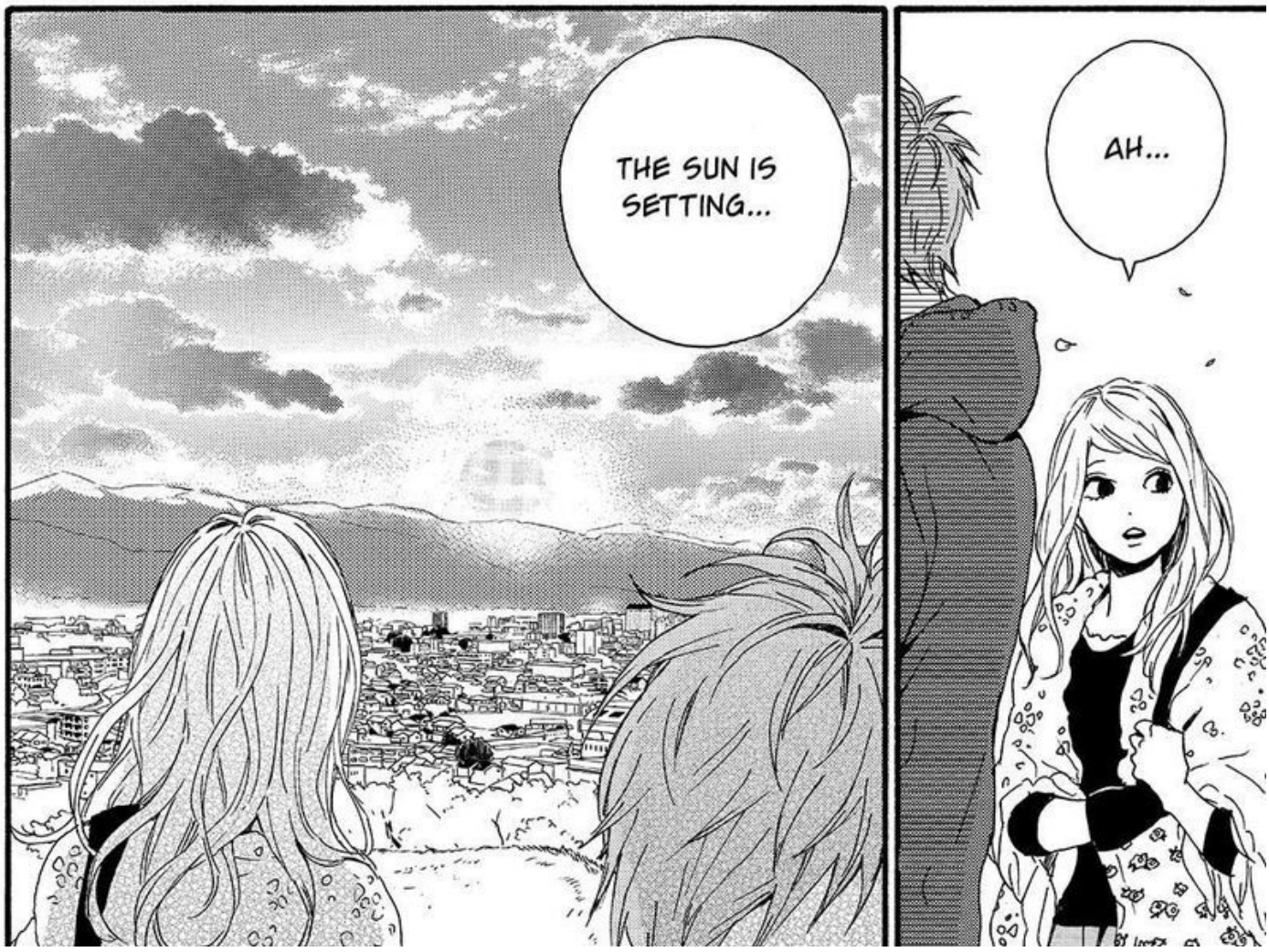



GRANDMA...
WHERE ARE MOM'S PHOTOS?
WHAT? WHY DO YOU ASK?
I JUST FEEL LIKE LOOKING AT THEM.

THEY'RE IN THE CLOSET UPSTAIRS, IN THE BACK ROOM.
RATTLE
RATTLE
CLACK

19:35
2/15 Fri
STAY AWAY...
...KAKERU.

AWW...
HE'S SLEEPING.
HE'S HAD A LONG DAY.
YEAH, MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL IT A DAY.

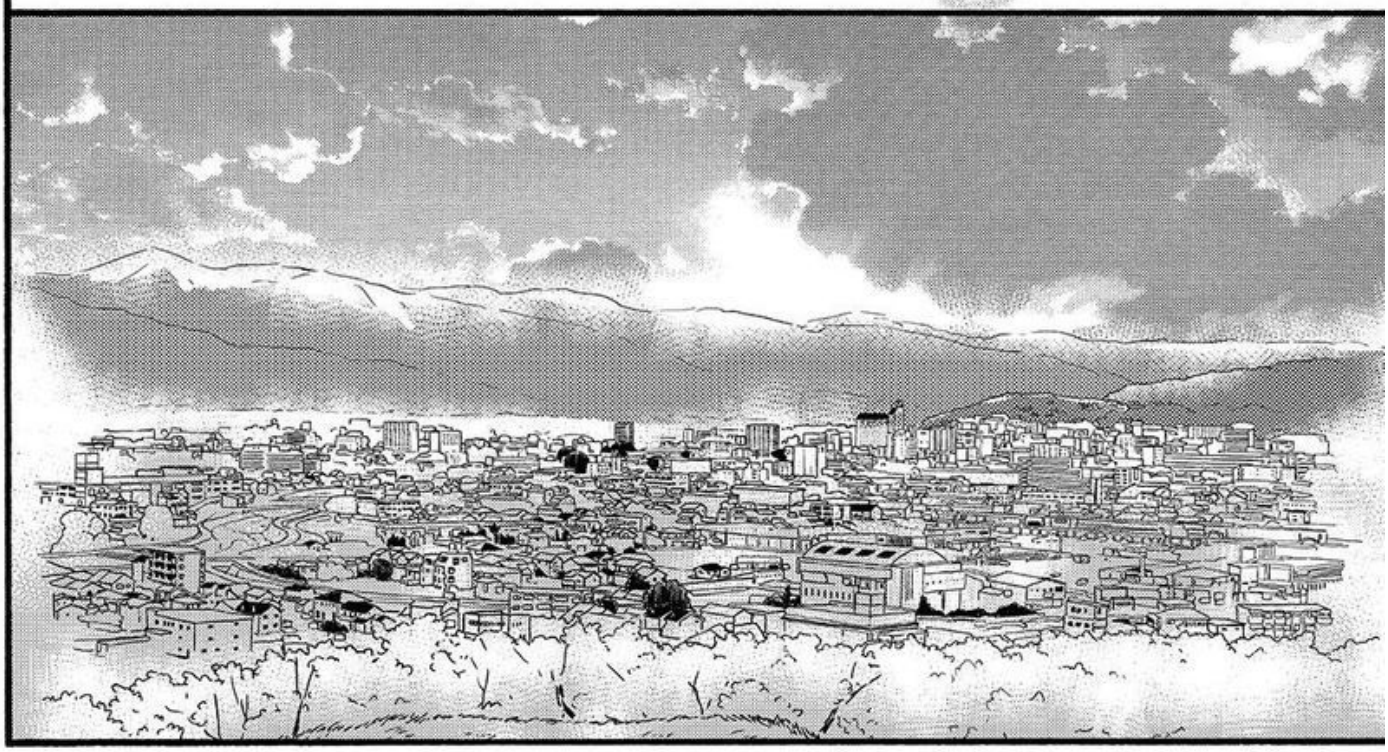

THE SUN IS SETTING...
AH...

THAT WAS ALL.

WE CRIED BECAUSE KAKERU WASN'T THERE TO SEE IT.

...BECAUSE THE SUNSET WAS BEAUTIFUL.

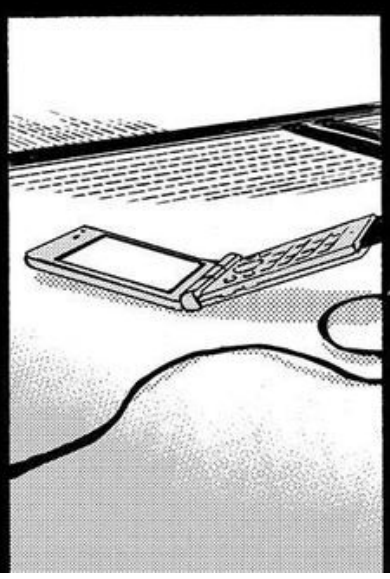
WE DIDN'T CRY...



HE LEFT JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO...
KAKERU?
IF KAKERU ISN'T THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE ANYMORE, THEN WE'RE GOOD...
...BUT WHY DON'T WE GO TO HIS HOUSE, JUST IN CASE?
...
HE SUDDENLY JUST RAN OUTSIDE, SO I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WENT...
...IS RIGHT OVER THERE!
HIS BIKE...
WAIT!
LET'S LOOK FOR HIM!

I WAS AFRAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN.
WE CHANGED THE FUTURE TOO MUCH.
...MATCH UP WITH ANYTHING IN THE LETTERS?
WHY DOESN'T THIS...
BUT IF IT BECAME THE SAME FUTURE AS IN THE LETTER, THERE'D BE NO POINT.

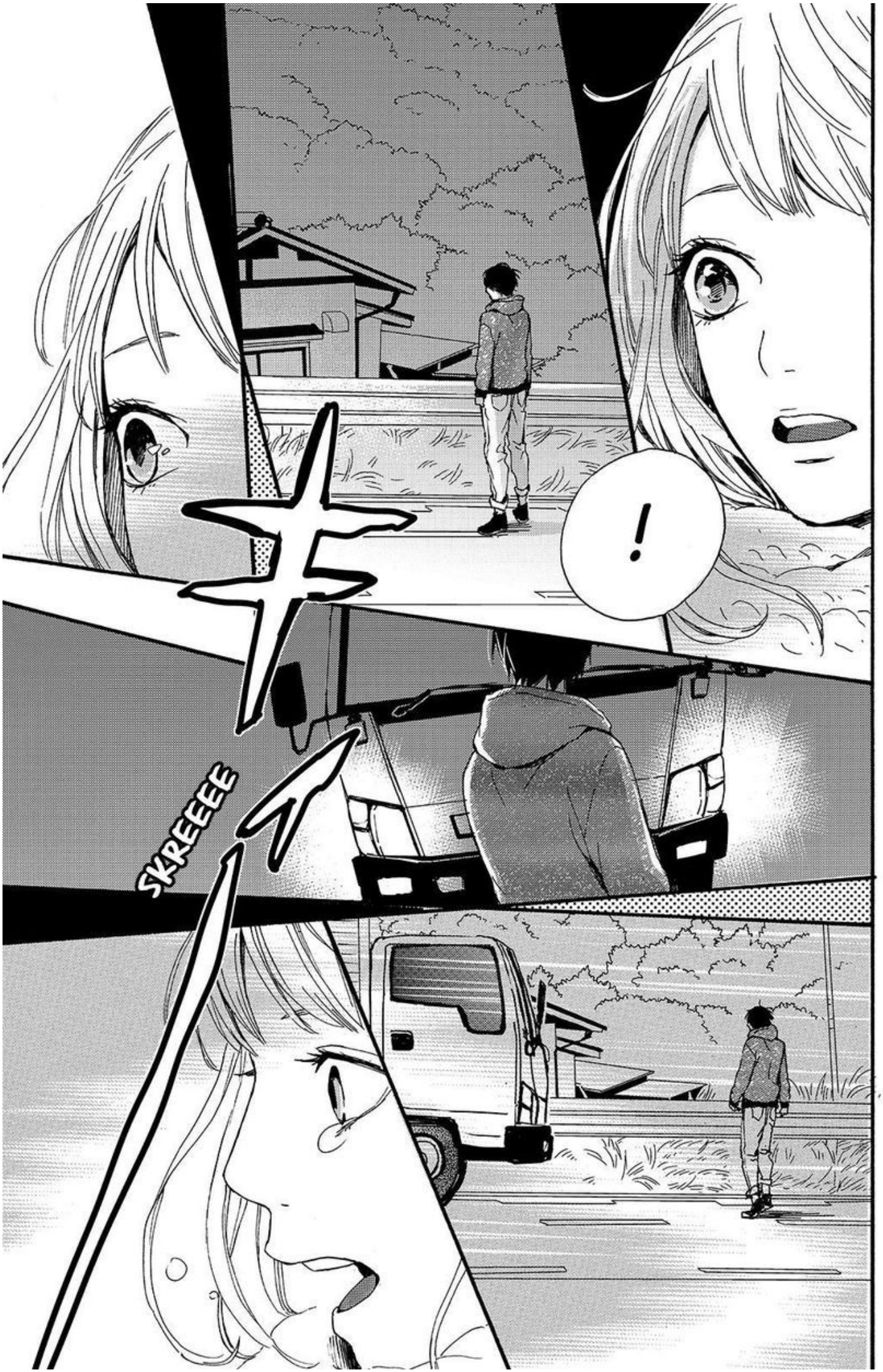
YEAH.
AS LONG AS WE CAN SAVE HIM...
...THERE'S NO PROBLEM.



LET'S SPLIT UP AND SEARCH FOR HIM.
YEAH!

EVEN IF...
...WE HAVEN'T SAVED KAKERU.
...WE SAVE KAKERU FROM THE ACCI-DENT...
From now on, I want you to have fun, Kakeru. I want you to do what you want to do. I'm sorry for getting in the way.
...HIS HEART AND MIND.
WE NEED TO SAVE...
HOW DOES HIS FACE...
...LOOK RIGHT NOW?
HELLO! HAGITA?!
WE GOT A SIGHTING FROM A DOG-WALKER.
HE SAW A KID WHO SOUNDS LIKE KAKERU ON THE STREET YOU TWO ARE HEADING TOWARDS.
GOT IT.
WE'LL HEAD OVER THERE, TOO.
DON'T CRY.

DON'T GO ANYWHERE.
DON'T BLAME YOUR-SELF.
HUFF...
HUFF...
LET'S RENDEZ-VOUS.
SAME HERE.
DID YOU SEE HIM?
HAGITA?!
NO.
BUT IT'S PITCH BLACK OUT HERE, SO WE'VE GOT LOUSY VISIBILITY.
RIGHT NOW, WE'RE NEAR NAKAYAMA-SHO.

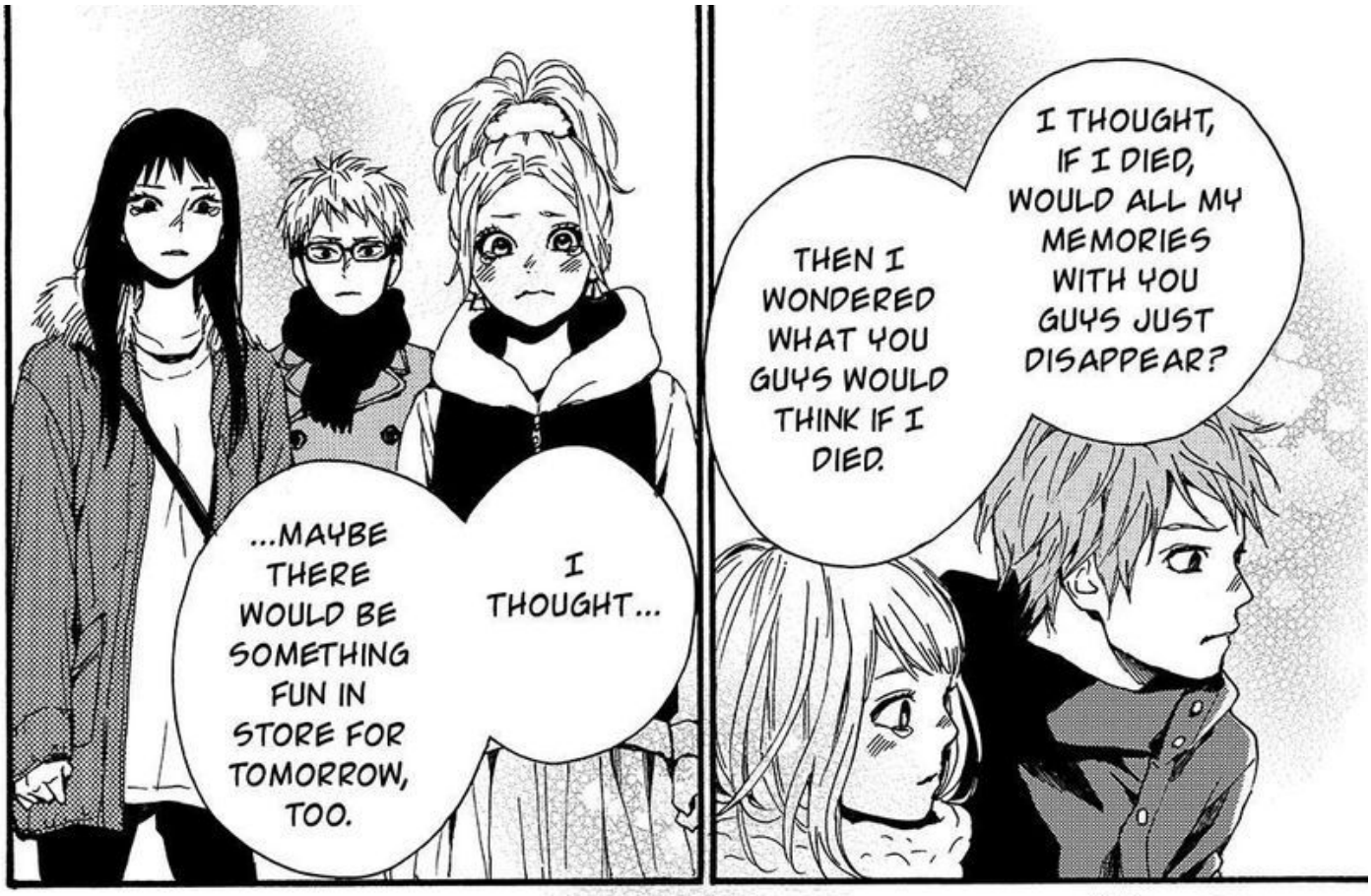

!
SKREEEE

KAKERU!
KAKERU OF ANOTHER EARTH...
...I'M SO SORRY I LET YOU DIE!
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT ON MY OWN.
SHE ONLY KNEW YOU WERE GONE.
YOU DID.
MY FUTURE SELF DIDN'T TEACH ME WHAT WAS IMPORTANT.

...THERE'S NO DO-OVER.
AFTER SOME-THING HAPPENS...
IT'S THE SAME, EVEN IN THIS WORLD. YOU CAN'T CHANGE THE PAST.
KAKERU!!
HEY!

KAKERU!
ARE YOU OKAY?!
IS HE ALL RIGHT?
ARE YOU HURT?!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

I THOUGHT I HAD TO APOLOGIZE TO MY MOTHER...
...I WANTED TO DIE.
...BUT...
...I COULDN'T DO IT.
I SUDDENLY BECAME...
...AFRAID TO DIE.


...MAYBE THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING FUN IN STORE FOR TOMORROW, TOO.
I THOUGHT...
THEN I WONDERED WHAT YOU GUYS WOULD THINK IF I DIED.
I THOUGHT, IF I DIED, WOULD ALL MY MEMORIES WITH YOU GUYS JUST DISAPPEAR?

IT WASN'T A WASTE.
HE REALLY DID CHANGE.
I THOUGHT...
...JUST YET.
...I DIDN'T WANNA DIE...
NAHO...
...GAVE ME CHOCOLATE.

BUT...
...WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE?
THANK GOOD-NESS...
KAKERU DID CHANGE.
IT WAS...
...IN THE LETTERS.
ALTHOUGH YOU MAY FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE.
...AND THAT WE SHOULD SAVE YOU.
...YOU WERE GOING TO COMMIT SUICIDE TONIGHT...
THE LETTERS SAID...
...LETTERS?

TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE...?
LIKE A RELAYED MESSAGE?
...TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE.
WE EACH GOT A LETTER FROM OURSELVES...
...YEAH.
AND WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO GOT A LETTER FROM THE FUTURE.
AND SUWA, YOU SAID YOU'D SEEN A PHOTO OF ME WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
...SHE SAID SHE HADN'T SHOWN YOU ANY PICTURES.
...BUT WHEN I ASKED MY GRANDMA ABOUT IT...
THE LETTER...
...NAHO HAD TODAY...

Dear Kakeru
Dear Kakeru
Dear Kakeru
Dear Kakeru
Dear Kakeru
THERE ARE LETTERS FOR YOU TOO, KAKERU.
I'M SORRY, KAKERU.
I DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT YOU BECAUSE I FIGURED BOYS WERE STRONG.
I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T PROTECT YOU.
I WANTED TO HAVE A LOT MORE FUN WITH YOU AND TALK A LOT MORE WITH YOU.
BUT I THOUGHT WE HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO DO THAT.
I'M SORRY.

I OFTEN THINK, IF I'D DONE THIS OR THAT BACK THEN, WOULD YOU STILL BE ALIVE?
WHERE DID I GO WRONG?
I SHOULD HAVE JUST ALWAYS CHOSEN WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.
I'M SORRY.
I NEVER IMAGINED THAT LOSING YOU WOULD BE THIS PAINFUL AND WOULD MAKE ME FEEL THIS LONELY.
I'M SORRY FOR TAKING YOU FOR GRANTED.
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SAVE YOU. I WISH I HAD KEPT A CLOSER EYE ON YOU.
I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH PAIN YOU WERE IN.
THEY ALL FELT TREMENDOUS REGRET...
...ABOUT LOSING YOU, KAKERU.
EVEN AFTER TEN YEARS.
I'M SURE THEY'LL FEEL IT FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.

IT'S... MY FAULT...?
NO!
YES, IT IS!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT...
IT IS YOUR FAULT!
SO I SWEAR TO GOD, IF YOU DIE, I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!
I'M SORRY...
...GUYS...

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IN THE LETTERS, WE WEREN'T ABLE TO AVOID IT.
I'M SO SORRY FOR INVITING YOU TO WALK HOME WITH US THAT DAY.
...WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING CEREMONY.
WE KNEW...
I'M SORRY, KAKERU...

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
...NO.
I WAS HAPPY YOU ASKED ME TO GO WITH YOU.

THANK YOU...
...FOR BEING MY FRIENDS.
PLEASE...
...DON'T LET THE FUTURE CHANGE.
LET'S STAY LIKE THIS FOREVER.
LET THIS MOMENT, WITH A SMILING KAKERU...
...CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE.

HEY.
COME TO THINK OF IT, WHY DIDN'T YOU RIDE YOUR BIKE TONIGHT, KAKERU?
IN THE LETTERS, THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS YOU DID.
?

WELL...
...I WAS GOING TO, BUT THE GEARS WERE MESSED UP.
IT LOOKED LIKE SOMEONE TRASHED IT ON PURPOSE.

WHAT?
SOME PEOPLE DO SUCH MEAN THINGS.
I KNOW WHO THE VANDAL IS...

HAGITA!

DEAR KAKERU,

Dear Kakeru

DO YOU FORGIVE US?
I WAS STILL A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT THEN, A CHILD WHO DIDN'T UNDERSTAND PRECIOUS EVERYDAY THINGS OR THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE.
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SAVE YOU. I WISH I HAD KEPT A CLOSER EYE ON YOU.
I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH PAIN YOU WERE IN.

IF YOU GIVE US ONE MORE CHANCE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT, WE'LL DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO PROTECT YOU.
I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE US AND LIVE.

APRIL 23, SPRING OF OUR 26TH YEAR
SHALL WE VIEW THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ON MOUNT KOBO TOGETHER?

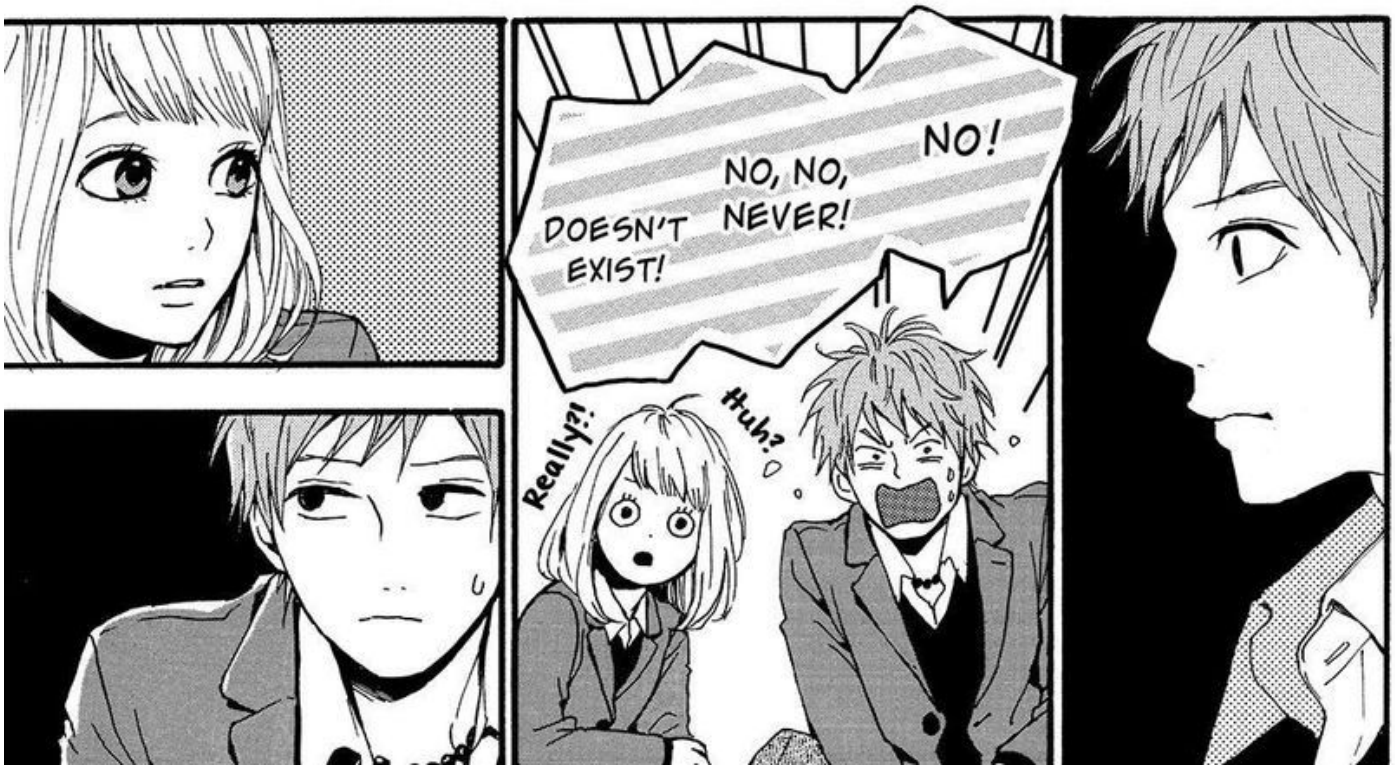
THE SUNSET ON THIS DAY IS SO BEAUTIFUL. THE VIEW FROM MOUNT KOBO, WITH THE ORANGE-TINTED SKY, TOWN, AND CHERRY BLOSSOMS... I WANT TO SEE IT WITH YOU, KAKERU.

WE'RE ALL WAITING FOR YOU.

IT SEEMS I QUIT THE CLUB AFTER YOU DIED.
YEAH.
SUWA, YOU'RE NOT PLAYING SOCCER TEN YEARS FROM NOW?
HUH?
WHO TOLD THEM?! HAGITA?!
NO! IT WAS OBVIOUS!
...SO DON'T TALK ABOUT TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE!
WE'RE ABOUT TO BURY A TIME CAPSULE...
DON'T SAY IT!
YOU'RE GONNA MEET MESSI, RIGHT?
YOU'RE GONNA BE A PRO SOCCER PLAYER, RIGHT?
BECOMING A SOCCER...
SORRY... I KNOW IT WAS YOUR DREAM...

SO THERE ARE PARALLEL WORLDS...
...WHICH MEANS...
...THERE ARE FUTURES WHERE ALL KINDS OF THINGS ARE DIFFERENT, RIGHT?
YEAH.
THERE MUST BE A FUTURE SOMEWHERE WHERE AZU AND HAGITA ARE MARRIED.
THERE ISN'T!

THEN...
...THERE'S A FUTURE WHERE SUWA AND NAHO ARE MARRIED TOO, HUH?


NO!
NO, NO, NEVER!
DOESN'T EXIST!
Really?!
Huh?

ALTHOUGH...
...I WISH THERE WERE ONE LIKE THAT.
ME, TOO!

Kakeru Naruse

LET'S JUST BURY THE DAMN TIME CAPSULE!
NOW HURRY UP!
Put the letters in the can!
But he looks happy!
He's embarrassed!

DEAR EVERYONE TEN YEARS IN THE FUTURE,

HOW ARE YOU ALL DOING?

ARE YOU ALL STILL FRIENDS TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

DO YOU STILL LAUGH TOGETHER?

DO YOU HAVE FUN EVERY DAY?

WHAT AM I DOING AT THIS MOMENT, TEN YEARS FROM NOW?

AM I STILL PLAYING SOCCER?

AM I MARRIED TO NAHO?

AM I TRULY ALIVE EVERY SINGLE DAY?

...CRY ALONE AGAIN...

...EVER...

IF YOU...

OR EVEN IF...

...THE DAY COMES WHEN YOU FIND JUST LIVING TO BE PAINFUL...

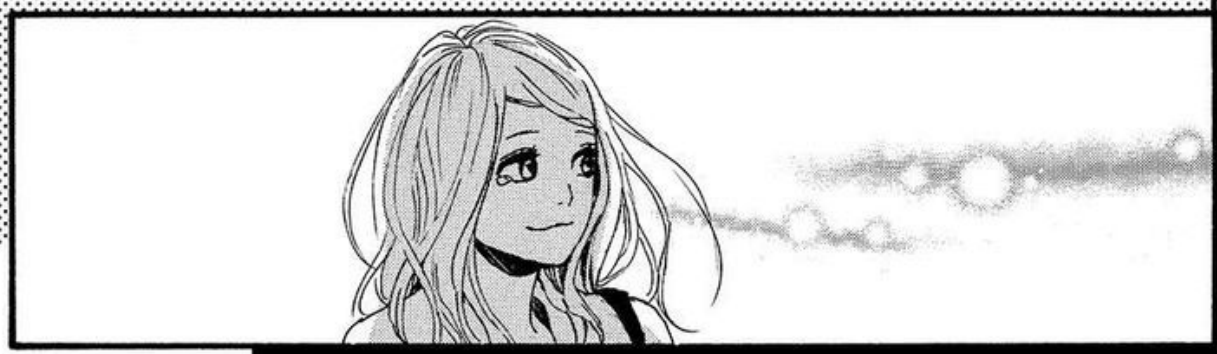
I AM.

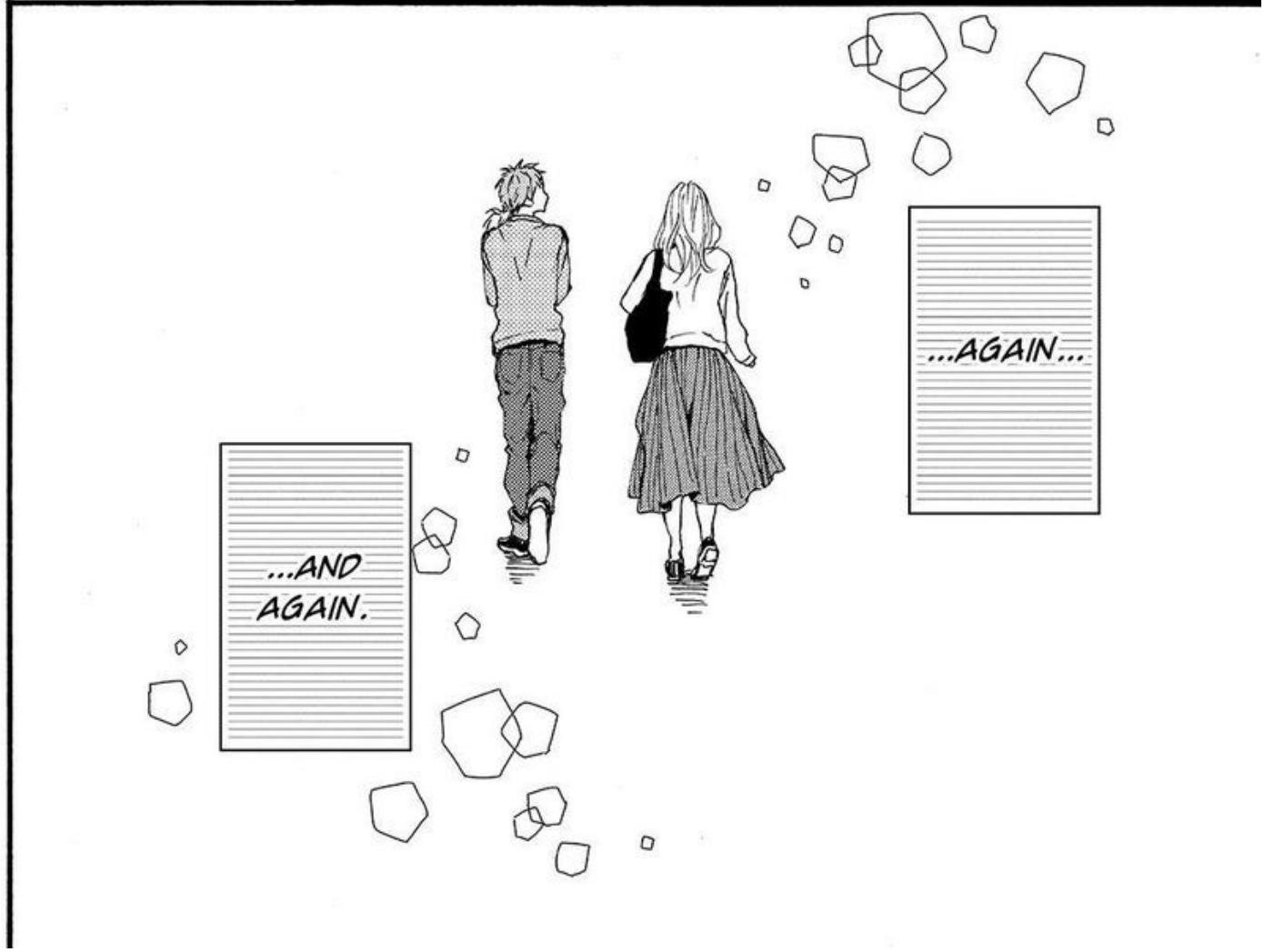
YOU LOOK HAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING.

...KAKERU?

WHAT'S WRONG...

...THEN I PROMISE...
I'M GLAD...
...TO BE ALIVE.
THANK YOU...
...FOR SAVING ME.
...I'LL SAVE YOU...




...AGAIN...
...AND AGAIN.